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Conflict Management Styles In Educational Organizations*

Eğitim Kurumlarında Çatışma Yönetimi Stilleri

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Abstract: Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in the social and professional life, where different people of different characteristics live and work together. The point is, to provide employees not be affected negatively from conflicts, via managing conflicts as not affecting the organizational climate and organizational balance. Therefore, especially in work life, managing conflicts in professional terms constitute great importance. In this sense, managers carry the greatest responsibility. As for educational organizations, the conflicts and the management of conflicts are of great importance because the organizational climate may affect the students. Educational organizations are among the organizations that have the most different personality traits. At this point, both managers and the teachers carry the responsibility. In order to provide the conflicts to be in the frame of expected level, responsible acts are needed. Thus, educational organizations may develop more. In this context the porpose of this study is to research the conflict management styles that are preferred in educational organizations and the attitudes of teachers towards conflict management. In the scope of the research private primary schools that are active in Burca City Nilüfer province are taken as sample and a survey form that consists demographical questions and Conflict Management Inventory (Rahim, 1983) is delivered to the schools via e-mail. The ethical commission permission of Bursa Technical University with the date and number 21.02.2022-E.8352, is also delivered to the participants. A total of 215 responds are gathered and the gathered data is analysed via SPSS 21.0 package programme. Reliability Analysis, Factor Analysis, Descriptive Analysis, Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test are applied. According to the results, there is not a statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic (gender, age, education, field of study) characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards conflict management. Therefore, it can be understood as an implication of the fact that the conflict management styles are not comprehended thoroughly in the sample schools, which implies a suggestion for the school managements for dwelling on conflict management.

Structured Abstract: Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in the social and professional life and it is among the indispensable conditions in organizations that choose a democratic management style. If the management's goal is achieving the better, there will always be alternative solutions. On the other hand, it is not always easy to choose one of these solutions, and choosing a choice among alternatives can cause tension

* The ethical commission permission of Bursa Technical University with the date and number 21.02.2022-E.8352, is also delivered to the participants.

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and conflict. Therefore, conflict may arise as an inevitable phenomenon in such situations. Thus, conflict management is a management duty that should be professionally run (Şanlı Güneş & Akbaba, 2020).

As the conflict literature developed, it has been observed that studies (Amason & Schweiger, 1994; Jehn, 1994; Jehn, 1997) began to focus on the benefits of conflict and it was argued that it would not be reasonable to generalize that conflict will always have a detrimental effect on the organization (Sayğan Yağız, 2021). Therefore, it can easily be concluded that when managed professionally, conflicts may even be beneficial for the organizations.

Educational organizations are one of the organizations that have the most different personality traits among organizations. Conflict has a visible characteristic especially in educational organizations that consists individuals that all have different characteristics and personality traits. As in every organization, educational organizations continue to exist to achieve their goals. Conflicts that are not managed well in the process of achieving the goals, will harm the organization and make the process of realizing the goal, which is the most basic element of the organization, difficult. The greatest responsibility in this regard falls on school managers; because of the fact that they have to be in contact with a number of people as a requirement of their duty. For this reason, it is very important for managers to have communication skills and to evaluate these skills in a qualified way. It is inevitable for managers and leaders who are aware of effective communication elements in an organization to be successful (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). For organizational effectiveness, knowing the needs of the people with whom the manager uses the existing structure and processes of the organization (Aydın, 2010) also provides him with important advantages and prepares the ground for more favorable conditions (Çobanoğlu & Yüksel, 2020).

The purpose of this study, is to reveal the attitudes of private primary school teachers towards conflict management and conflict management styles. The fact that there is scarce research in the context of educational organizations, especially national literature, this study is expected to shed light to the primary school managements in terms of handling with the conflicts. It is also expected to shed light to the academics in terms of future researches. In the context of the research, private primary schools in Bursa city Nilüfer province are taken as the sample of the study; because of the fact that it is impossible to reach the whole population in terms of time and budget. A survey form that consists demographical questions and Conflict Management Inventory (Rahim, 1983) is delivered to the schools via e-mail and a total of 215 responds are gathered. The ethical commission permission of Bursa Technical University with the date and number 21.02.2022-E.8352, is also delivered to the participants. The gathered data is analysed via SPSS 21.0 package programme. In order to the test the hypothesis whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the demographical characteristics of the participants and their attitudes towards conflict management, or not, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney-U Tests are applied. In addition, descriptive statistics and frequency statistics are analyzed. Factor Analysis is also applied to the scale in order to find out the dimensions of the scale. According to the results, there is not a statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards conflict management. Therefore, it can be understood as an implication of the fact that the conflict management styles are not comprehended thoroughly in the sample schools, which implies a suggestion for the school managements for dwelling on conflict management. However, it is found out that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between gender characteristic and abstaining dimension, age characteristic and comprimising dimension, education characteristic and domination dimension and field of study characteristic and abstaining dimension. In this sense, when the results are overviewed, it can be concluded that female teachers and foreign languages teachers do not abstain from conflicts; in 26-34 age group, teachers prefer comprimising in disagreements and college graduates prefer to be dominant when a conflict occurs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the teachers that belong to these mentioned demographical characteristics, are more aware of the conflicts in addition to being aware of conflict management styles.

Keywords: Management, conflict, conflict management, educational organizations, primary schools, teachers

Öz: Çatışma, farklı özelliklere sahip farklı insanların bir arada yaşadığı ve çalıştığı sosyal ve profesyonel yaşamda kaçınılmaz bir olgudur. Bu noktada önemli olan, çatışmaların örgütsel iklimi olumsuz etkilemeyecek şekilde yönetilerek örgütün düzeninin bozulmamasını ve çalışanların etkilenmemesini sağlamaya çalışmaktır. Bu nedenle, iş hayatında profesyonel anlamda çatışmaları yönetmek son derece büyük

önem arz etmektedir. Bu anlamda da en büyük sorumluluğu örgüt yöneticileri taşımaktadır. Eğitim örgütlerinde ise, örgütsel iklimin öğrencileri etkileyebilmesi nedeniyle çatışmalar ve çatışmaların yönetilmesi büyük önem taşımaktadır; zira eğitim örgütleri genellikle en çok kişilik farklılıkları barındıran örgütler arasında yer almaktadır. Bu noktada da hem yöneticilere hem de kurumdaki eğitimcilere büyük sorumluluk düşmektedir. Çatışmaların istenilen düzeyde ve istenilen sonuç odaklı olması için özverili bir çalışma gerekmektedir. Böylece eğitim kurumları daha da gelişebilecektir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışmanın amacı, eğitim örgütlerinde tercih edilen çatışma yönetim tarzlarının ve öğretmenlerin çatışma yönetimine ilişkin tutumlarının araştırılmasıdır. Araştırma kapsamında Bursa ili Nilüfer ilçesinde faaliyet gösteren özel ilköğretim okulları örneklem olarak alınmıştır ve demografik sorular ile Çatışma Yönetimi Envanteri (Rahim, 1983) içeren bir anket formu e-posta aracılığıyla okullara iletilmiştir. 215 yanıt alınmış, elde edilen veriler SPSS 21.0 paket programı aracılığı ile analiz edilmiştir. Güvenilirlik Analizi, Faktör Analizi, Betimsel İstatistik Testi, Mann-Whitney U Testi ve Kruskal-Wallis Testi uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, özel ilköğretim okulları öğretmenlerinin demografik karakterleri (cinsiyet, yaş, eğitim, branş) ve çatışma yönetimine ilişkin tutumları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmamaktadır. Bu sonuçtan hareketle, örneklem olarak seçilen ve anket uygulaması yapılan okullarda çatışma yönetiminin tam anlamıyla kavranamamış olduğu, dolayısıyla çatışma yönetiminin üzerine düşülmesi gereken bir konu olduğu çıkarımı yapılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yönetim, çatışma, çatışma yönetimi, eğitim kurumları, ilköğretim, öğretmenler

Introduction

When the literature on conflict is examined thoroughly, it is understood that especially the early studies consider conflict as a phenomenon that harms the organization and negatively affects organizational performance and job satisfaction (Jehn, 1997). In these studies, which handle conflict as a dysfunctional phenomenon, it is observed that employees and managers describe conflicts as a "problem" that should be avoided or should be resolved quickly when it is not possible to avoid it.

As the conflict literature developed, it has been observed that studies (Amason and Schweiger, 1994; Jehn, 1994; Jehn, 1997) began to focus on the benefits of conflict and it was argued that it would not be reasonable to generalize that conflict will always have a detrimental effect on the organization (Sayğan Yağız, 2021).

Conflict is one of the indispensable conditions in organizations that choose a democratic management style. If the management's goal is achieving the better, there will always be alternative solutions. It is not always easy to choose one of these solutions, and choosing a choice among alternatives can cause tension and conflict. Conflict may arise as an inevitable phenomenon in such situations (Şanlı Güneş &Akbaba, 2020). Therefore, conflict management is a management duty that should be professionally run.

Educational organizations are one of the organizations that have the most different personality traits among organizations. Conflict has a visible characteristic especially in educational organizations that consists individuals that all have different characteristics and personality traits. As in every organization, educational organizations continue to exist to achieve their goals. Conflicts that are not managed well in the process of achieving the goals will harm the organization and make the process of realizing the goal, which is the most basic element of the organization, difficult. The greatest responsibility in this regard falls on school managers; because of the fact that they have to be in contact with a number of people as a requirement of their duty. For this reason, it is very important for managers to have communication skills and to evaluate these skills in a qualified way. It is inevitable for managers and leaders who are aware of effective communication elements in an organization to be successful (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). For organizational effectiveness, knowing the needs of the people with whom the manager uses the

existing structure and processes of the organization (Aydın, 2010) also provides him with important advantages and prepares the ground for more favorable conditions (Çobanoğlu & Yüksel, 2020).

The purpose of this study, is to reveal the attitudes of private primary school teachers towards conflict management and conflict management styles. In this sense, private primary schools in Bursa city Nilüfer province are taken as the sample of the study; because of the fact that it is impossible to reach the whole population in terms of time and budget. A survey form that consists demographical questions and Conflict Management Inventory (Rahim, 1983) is delivered to the schools via e-mail and a total of 215 responds are gathered. The gathered data is analysed via SPSS 21.0 package programme. According to the results, there is not a statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards conflict management.

Conflict at Work

Conflict, which comes to people as a scary word, is a concept that is often referred to negativities, hostilities and wars. When the conflicts in modern times are considered in terms of some consequences brought by the lifestyle, it is seen that it ends negative for one of the parties that are in conflict. Situations where conflicts are resolved based on power are usually situations where there is a visible inequality of power between the parties. Even the use of violence by the power-based party to the weak party is an expected situation (Karip, 2013; Yüksel, 2020).

Conflict is one of the concepts that does not have an agreed definition due to its versatility. Although different aspects are brought to the fore according to the discipline, conflict in general is a state of struggle that can occur in feelings, thoughts, goals and targets (Ertürk, 2018). Although conflict is not unique to humans, the ability to be aware of and manage the tension created by it, exist only in humanbeings. (Aksoy, 2005; Çiftçi, et. Al., 2021).

The concept of conflict has different definitions in literature. Basically it can be described as a concept that occurs as a result of interests, power, status and contradiction between two parties. These reasons can occur when the parties want to share a resource which is scarce, have different values, have different beliefs etc. (Karip, 2013). As a result disagreements, tensions, clashes and a negative communication culture among people or groups take place (Külekçi Akyavuz, 2020).

In another definition, conflict is defined as the deterioration of the decision-making mechanism and the difficulty of deciding what to do as a result of this impaired mechanism (Özkalp & Kırel, 2001). According to Erdoğan (1996), the core of the conflicts that arise is the person that does not adopt the ideas and behaviors of the people with whom he/she works and the group he/she belongs to. As seen in the literature, the definitions for conflict cover the events in which the parties have a disagreement with the other parties to protect their own interests (Yüksel, 2020).

One of the most basic needs of humanity is communication. The communication elements that people use in maintaining their daily lives, protecting their existing borders and developing the society, are very effective. The types of communication used by people differ according to societies and even individuals. Since the reason for the existence of organizations is people, it is an expected situation that differences will arise in organizations. An organization is a construct that is dynamic construct that consists a group of people interact with each other in order to achieve a common purpose. The fact that they all have different feelings, thoughts, beliefs and behaviours, can cause conflicts within the organization (Akçakaya, 2003). Disputes in the relations between people in the interaction process also create conflicts between the parties. Conflicts may arise from the fact that the parties share a limited resource, have dissimilar desires in a common situation, and have different values, beliefs and attitudes (Rahim, 1992). It is quite easy to see conflict in all formations that show a developmental stage like humans. Therefore, it is inevitable that personal

disagreements and conflicts arise in all environments where people exist, due to differences arising from personal characteristics (Slaikeu & Hasson, 1998; Çobanoğlu & Yüksel, 2020).

Conflict Reasons and Types

The problem that causes the conflict is shaped according to the environment in which it exists and has its own unique characteristics. The causes of conflict have been revealed by different researchers in various studies. While these reasons are sometimes experienced in individual dimensions, sometimes they can be experienced in team or organizational dimensions. Some of the causes of conflict are as follows (Gökoğlan, 2020):

- Interdependence
- Personality differences
- Perception differences
- Communication deficiencies
- Making decisions jointly
- Purpose, interest and value differences and reward system differences
- Problems arising from management style
- Problems related to status and use of power
- Obstruction
- Shared use of available resources
- Polarization between employer and employee/s
- New situations that requires change

In addition, there are different types of conflict. A conflict may be *affective,* which is a condition in which organization members have interpersonal clashes caused by anger and/or other emotional states (Vahtera, et. Al., 2017; Burnett, 1993). A conflict may be *substantive*, which is characterized by divergences among group members' opinions about the duties (Nkomo, et.al, 2020). *Conflict of interest,* on the other hand, is the situation of inconsistency between parties in terms of the getting a share from a scarce resource (Druckman & Zechmeister, 1973). There is also *realistic and non-realistic* conflict. While realistic conflict is associated with goal-oriented disagreement, non-realistic conflict has a little to do with group or organizational goals (Ross & Ross, 1989). *Institutionalized conflict* stands for following the explicit rules, while *non-institutionalized* conflict has nothing to do with explicit rules (Saaty, 1990). Conflict, in short, is a situation of disagreement that occurs from different reasons within the individual, between individuals, within the group and between groups.

Conflict types can be cathegorized according to their *sides, consequences, their place in the organization* and *the way they arise*.

Conflicts by Side

It has been examined that, there are five main groups in terms of the parties/sides of the conflict. These are; *conflicts within the individual, interpersonal conflicts, group or team conflicts, intergroup conflicts* and *interorganizational* conflicts.

Conflict within the individual is the type of conflict that the individual experiences as a result of feeling under pressure when he/she is not sure of what his/her expectations are and what is expected of him/her, or when he/she thinks that he/she is given more burden than he/she can carry.

Many roles (such as parent, managerial role, caregiver role etc.) and the inability to meet the demands of each role immediately cause people to experience internal conflict (Gökoğlan, 2020).

Interpersonal conflict is defined as the disagreement of two or more people on various issues. It can occur among family members, housemates and friends, or in a wider range of people such as colleagues, workers, tenants, neighbors. The most important causes of interpersonal conflict are listed as individuals' goals, the path they follow, differences of opinion and differences in interests (Koçel, 2015).

Group or team conflict may occur because of the fact that most of the work is done as a team and the individual is incompatible with the group or another group of which he/she is a member, and is forced to obey the rules (Can, 1991).

Intergroup conflicts, on the other hand, are defined as conflicts that occur frequently in organizations and occur between two different teams in the organization. The important thing here is that the number of people in conflict increases and as a result, the type of interaction experienced, changes (Baykal Tatar & Türkmen, 2014).

Inter-organizational conflicts can be defined as the situation in which different organizations are in conflict with each other. Such conflicts depend on the nature of the market in which the organizations are located, government regulations, the structure of the institution, etc. (Gökoğlan, 2020).

Conflicts by Consequences

Conflicts can have negative connotations. It would not be the right approach to accept that all kinds of conflicts have negative effects and are not functional. It is possible to get rid of the negative effects and reach the results in favor of the conflicting parties. The conflict approach used at this stage and the person who manages the conflict play a significant role in causing the conflict to have *constructive* or *destructive* effects. Such conflicts are divided into *functional/constructive conflicts* and *dysfunctional/destructive conflicts* (Gökoğlan, 2020).

Constructive conflicts are conflicts that benefit and contribute to the achievement of the organization's goals and increase the productivity of the group. The mainly include flexible features (Gökoğlan, 2020).

Destructive conflicts are conflicts that do not help the organization to achieve its goals. They are not flexible. They reduce motivation within the business. At the same time, they can affect the decision-making mechanism of the management, as well as disrupting the communication and information exchange within the organization. In this type of conflict, the parties adopt a win-lose approach and strive to defeat the other (Wright RR, Mohr CD & Sinclair, 2014).

However, it would not be a correct approach to accept the view that conflicts often contain the characteristics of a single conflict type. Many conflicts show the characteristics of constructive and destructive conflicts together. Therefore, the goal of the managers in conflict management should be to obtain results in favor of the parties by choosing constructive conflict approaches (Robbinsmary & Coulter, 2012).

Conflicts According to Their Place in the Organization

Conflicts are examined in three groups according to their place in the organization. These are; *vertical conflicts, horizontal conflicts* and *command-staff conflict* (Can, 1991).

Vertical conflict is the type of conflict that occurs between employees who are in the subordinate - superior position according to the hierarchy levels within the organization (Tunçer, 2012).

Horizontal conflict is called the type of conflict experienced by people working at the same level in the organizational hierarchy (Folger, Poole & Stuttman, 2001).

Command-staff conflict is the conflict that occurs between the employees who are experts in their fields, guides and consultants, and the command staff who can give orders to their subordinates, control and coordinate their work (Gökoğlan, 2020).

Conflicts by The Way They Arise

Conflicts are divided into four groups according to the way they arise *as potential conflict, perceived conflict, felt conflict* and *open conflict* (Gökoğlan, 2020).

Potential conflict refers to situations that can create a suitable environment for conflict such as groups within the organization, differences in purpose, insufficient resources etc. (Koçel, 2015).

Perceived conflict is related to the parties' perception of the conditions they are in as a conflict situation, and it does not matter whether there is a conflict or not. If group members perceive that differences exist, then it means that there is conflict (Robbinsmary & Coulter, 2012).

The felt conflict, refers to the feelings of the parties about the situations that occurred. Feelings by individuals about the behavior of the other party can affect their work attitudes and behavior within the organization. The parties may feel tense, angry etc. and can think that conflict will ocur (Koçel, 2015).

Open conflict refers to the transformation of the conflict into action for the parties. In open conflict, the rhetoric may be heavier, there may be mutual arguments, and this may progress to violence. Wars between countries are shown as an example of open conflict (Gökoğlan, 2020).

Conflict Management

In terms of organizations, it is thought that it is not possible to eliminate the conflict altogether. This idea pushes all employees, especially managers, to develop/use conflict management styles. In other words, the effects of conflict, which is an undeniable fact of life, can be shaped by humans' personal perceptions and actions. The most commonly used classification in the literature on this subject is Rahim's five-point classification (Akkoyun, 2020; Chan et. Al., 2014; Karip, 2003). These are *domination, avoidance, problem solving, compliance* and *compromise* (Çiftçi et. Al., 2021).

The styles in the model are weighted in line with the motivational orientation of the individuals and five different behavioral styles are formed by the combination of the two dimensions (Rahim, et. Al., 2000). Which style a person will use, is also related to the positions of the conflicting parties. While the person who has a conflict with his/her subordinate can easily choose the dominative style, he/she will probably not be able to use this style when he/she has a conflict with his superior. Therefore, based on the assumption that subordinates, managers and people at the same hierarchical level would choose different styles due to these differences, afore mentioned five different forms of conflict management style are developed (Friedman et. al., 2000). To briefly explain these styles (Sönmez & Bozkurt, 2021):

Domination: This conflict management style, which is also referred to as coercion, competition, control, and competition in the literature, is defined by winning-losing or engaging in compulsive behaviors. The individual generally ignores the wishes and needs of the other party in order to meet his/her own demands (Rahim, 2002). Instead of seeking a constructive solution, it is aimed to establish superiority over the other party and to conclude the conflict in his/her favor. The parties are in competition and since one side will win, there may be a tendency to try every way for this purpose (Karip, 2013; Corey, 2007).

Avoidance: This conflict management style is also called withdrawal, non-intervention, inaction and ignorance. It manifests itself with non-involvement in conflict, avoidance of responsibility or withdrawal behaviors. The person who shows avoidance behaviors is insufficient to meet the demands of both himself/herself and the other party (Rahim, 2002). There is a tendency to ignore and remain neutral rather than resolving conflict. However, the individual's being passive and the suspension of events can cause tension to increase and grow over time (Uysal, 2004; Rahim et. al., 2001).

Problem Solving: The basic principles of this strategy, which is also called as integration and cooperation, are taking into account the wishes and interests of both parties and exchanging information. A democratic solution is sought with the win-win principle (Özmen, 1997). By providing an open communication environment, the root causes of the problems are examined and the maximum possible satisfaction level is aimed for both parties. This approach provides openness, empathy, sharing information, searching for various solutions, analyzing differences and finding creative solutions (Rahim, 2002).

Compliance: The strategy of compliance, also known as conformity, appeasement, softening, benevolence, compatibility, and non-resistance, can be explained as ignoring differences by concentrating on common points with the aim of appeasing or pleasing the other party (Rahim, 2002). In conformity behavior, the compliant party surrenders to the wishes of the other party and gives up its own interests and shows self-sacrifice (Gross & Guerrero, 2000).

Compromise: It is the decision by both parties to make concessions in the resolution of the conflict (Rahim, 2002). The implementation of this strategy does not create a clear winner or loser. It is proportional to the concession power of the parties. However, this way provides a temporary solution and it is possible to experience a conflict again (Üngüren et. al., 2009; Sönmez & Bozkurt, 2021).

The fact that managers organize an effective conflict management process and use the right conflict management strategies, contributes to the development of positive attitudes of both superiors and inferiors, providing a better working environment, increasing the level of trust of employees, and, as a result, the emergence of a win-win situation in solving problems (Chan et. al., 2007). For organizational managers, conflict management can be defined as a process that needs to be directed to the source of the conflict. Solutions to conflict should be sought at the source of the conflict (Özkara & Tunç, 2020).

Managers with high conflict management skills can control conflicts and reach inferences for the benefit of the organization by taking advantage of conflicts. In this respect, conflicts in organizations should be well defined, their sources should be determined, evaluated and solutions should be produced (Ada, 2013). If these can be achieved, conflicts can be successfully managed in organizations. If managers encounter conflict, they are expected to produce effective solutions within the framework of functionality and harmony acceptable to the parties, and to resolve conflicts in a way that will provide organizational benefit. Conflicts should be used as a stimulating force for positive change in health organizations that have a dynamic structure (McKibben, 2017). Successful managers try to manage conflicts rather than avoiding conflicts within the organization (Rahim, 2002; Yanık et. al., 2020).

Previous Researches

When the literature is scrutinized, there can be found a number of researches that focus on conflict management in organizations. There also researches that focus on conflict management in educational organizations. In this section, some of the international and national researches are tried to be presented.

Valente & Laurenço (2020), made a quantitative research on 382 Portuguese teachers. According to the findings, teachers with higher levels of emotional intelligence use more integrating and compromising strategies for conflict management. In this sense, they become successful in managing conflicts in the classroom as well.

Chandolia & Anastasiou (2020) conducted a research in order to reveal conflict sources and conflict management styles in addition to their effectiveness in Secondary Education schools in Greece. 128 teachers from twelve schools in the region of Epirus, NW Greece participated in the research. According to the findings, conflict is seen frequently in schools and the most frequent sources are interpersonal and organizational factors. In terms of conflict management, compromising and collaborative styles are used. It is also found that the transformational and transactional leadership styles are more effective in conflict resolution.

Nkomo et. al. (2020), aimed to reveal school teachers' perceptions on conflict management. The participants were 8 school managers, 32 members of disciplinary committee and 24 classroom practitioners from 8 schools in Mberengwa District. According to the findings, poor communication, unfairness, shortage of resources, role-conflicts, poor governance and political afflictions were the main causes of conflict. In terms of conflict management styles, confrontation, collaboration and compromising were found as the most used conflict management strategies.

Külekçi Akyavuz (2020), researched both the conflict situations that the primary school teachers experience and the conflict management styles. The research was conducted on primary school teachers in the center of Kilis City. According to the findings, conflicts are seen frequently between the teachers and the school administrators, in addition to the parents of the students. It is also found that the conflict reasons are related with injustice, lack of communication, pressure, ignored opinions, ignored physical needs, gossip, communication obstacles, grouping and distrust. In addition to these findings, in terms of conflict management it was found that the teachers prefer to use integrating, compromising and obliging strategies.

Şanlı Güneş & Akbaba (2020), conducted a study to determine the relationship between conflict management styles and self-esteem of school administrators working in primary and secondary schools. The research universe was primary and secondary school administrators in Antalya province, and the study sample consists of primary and secondary school administrators in Serik and Manavgat districts. The research was carried out with the participation of 241 school administrators working in 179 official primary and secondary schools in Serik and Manavgat districts. As a result of the research, it was found that there was also a relationship between school administrators' self-esteem and their use of avoidance and domination styles, and no significant correlation was found between the characteristics of individuals with high self-esteem and integrating and colloboration styles. The most preferred conflict management style by the participants was integration and compromising, while the least they used was domination and avoidance. At the same time, it has been concluded that there is a relationship between compromising, abstaining and dominating, which have characteristics that contradict the characteristics of individuals with high self-esteem.

Yurdunkulu & Oktay (2020), researched the relationship between organizational culture and the conflict management styles preferred by school administrators. A total of 622 teachers in primary and secondary schools in the central districts of Mersin City were the sample of the study. The findings showed that there is a positive and high-level relationship between the school culture and the conflict management styles of school administrators. In addition, it was also found that the "dominating style of conflict management" affects the school culture negatively.

Methodology

The purpose of this study, is to find out the the attitudes of teachers in educational organizations towards conflict management. In this sense, as it is impossible to reach all the educational organizations in terms of time and budget, private primary schools in Bursa city Nilüfer province are taken as sample. In the scope of the research, a survey form that consists demographical questions and Organizational Conflict Inventory Scale (Rahim, 1983) is prepared and delivered to the targeted population, which is around 350 teachers, via e-mail. The ethical commission permission of Bursa Technical University with the date and number 21.02.2022-E.8352, is also delivered to the participants. The Organizational Conflict Inventory Scale has 28 items and 5 dimensions as *integration, comprimising, domination, reconciliation* and *abstaining*. 215 responds are collected and the collected data analyzed via SPSS 21.0 package programme. The reliability of the scale is found as 68,9.

Demographical Findings

According to demographical findings (Table 1), 158 (%73,5) participants are women, 57 (%26,5) participants are men. As for age groups, 40 (%18,6) participants are in 18-25 age group, 61 (%28,4) participants are in 26-34 age group, 44 (%20,5) participants are in 35-44 age group, 32 (%14,9) participants are in 45-54 age group and 38 (%17,7) participants are in 55+ age group. In terms of education, 192 (%89,3) participants have undergraduate degrees, 23 (%10,7) participants have post-graduate degrees. None of the participants have PhD. In terms of field of study, 52 (%24,2) participants are foreign languages teachers, 34 (%15,8) participants are social sciences teachers, 45 (%20,9) participants are natural sciences teachers, 50 (%23,3) participants are class teachers and 34 (%15,8) participants are teaching in several other fields.

Table 1: Demographical Findings

Gender	**Women**	**Men**			
	158 (%73,5)	57 (%26,5)			
Age	**18-25**	**26-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55+**
	40 (%18,6)	61 (%28,4)	44 (%20,5)	32 (%14,9)	38 (17,7)
Education	**Undergraduate**	**Post-Graduate**	**PhD**		
	192 (%89,3)	23 (%10,7)	-		
Field of Study	**Foreign Language**	**Social Sciences**	**Natural Sciences**	**Class Teacher**	**Other**
	52 (%24,2)	34 (%15,8)	45 (%20,9)	50 (%23,3)	34 (%15,8)

Hypothesis

H_0: There is not a statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic (gender, age, education, field of study) characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management h0: $\mu 1 > \mu 2$

H_1: There is statistically significant difference between *gender* characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management h1: $\mu 1 > \mu 2$

H_2: There is statistically significant difference between *age* characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management h2: $\mu 1 > \mu 2$

H_3: There is statistically significant difference between *education* characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management h3: $\mu 1 > \mu 2$

H_4: There is statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic *field of study* characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management h4: $\mu 1 > \mu 2$

Reliability Findings

The questionnaire form consists of two parts. The first part includes demographical questions, and the second part includes the Conflict Management Inventory developed by Rahim (1983). According to the factor analysis, the items of the scale gather under 5 dimensions as in the original scale. According to the reliability analysis of the scale (Table 2), the cronbach's alpha value is 0,689. Because of the fact that some of the items caused error in the process of statistical analysis, 14 items have been excluded. The value of reliability analysis (0,689) is accepted as acceptable ($0,60 \leq \alpha < 0,70$), even good ($0,70 \leq \alpha < 0,90$), with reference to the study of Kılıç (2016).

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Value of the Scale

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Number of Items
Conflict Management Inventory	,689	14

Research Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics results (Table 3) of the Conflict Management Scale show that the most important item according to the participants is the 3rd statement with a mean of 4,07, "I try to explain all the rough issues in order to provide the best solutions for the issues". Secondly, the idea of "I try to move with my co-workers in order to provide a problem to be comprehended thoroughly", which is the 4th statement with an average of 4,01. In the third place, there is the idea of "When I face a problem, I try to move with my co-workers in order to find a solution that will fulfil our expectations", which is the 1st statement with 3,99 average.

It can be concluded that the participants give great importance to reconciliation and integration with their co-workers; which implies that they generally refrain from conflicts and disagreements.

On the other hand, the least important item for the participants is the 7th statement "I generally insist on pursuing an issue in my own way", with an average of 2,45**.**

From this, it can again be concluded that the participants do not move individually within the organization but with their co-workers. Instead of individual actions and problem solving ways, they prefer to discuss and move together with their co-workers. It can also be concluded that by this way they automatically refrain from conflicts and thus; do not have to take the responsibility of any results.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Items		Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree	x	Standard Deviation
1- When I face a problem, I try to move with my co-workers in order to find a solution that will fulfil our expectations.	**fi**	5	9	0	0	11	**,99**	1,28249
	Y.fi	,0	,8	4,0	8,6	1,6		
2- When I try to find a solution to an issue, I expect to be informed totally.	**fi**	7	4	4	1	09	,93	1,33446
	Y.fi	,9	1,2	1,2	9,1	0,7		
3- I try to explain all the rough issues in order to provide the best solutions for the issues.	**fi**	4	0	1	0	20	**,07**	1,27091
	YY.fi	6,5	9,3	9,8	18,6	55,8		
4- I try to move with my co-workers in order to provide a problem to be comprehended thoroughly.	**fi**	8	2	4	5	26	**,01**	1,43378
	Y.fi	3,0	,6	,5	6,3	8,6		
5- I generally agree with the suggestions of my co-workers.	**fi**	1	8	9	4	3	,65	1,29130
	Y.fi	,8	3,0	,8	9,1	9,3		
6- I try to provide the needs of my co-workers.	**fi**	9	5	2	9	0	,72	1,27303
	Y.fi	,8	,0	4,2	2,8	7,2		
7- I generally insist on pursuing an issue in my own way.	**fi**	6	4	2	7	6	**,45**	1,28857
	Y.fi	6,0	9,1	,6	1,9	,4		
8- When I try to solve a problem with my co-workers, I exchange true knowledge.	**fi**	1	2	4	1	7	,74	1,37473
	Y.fi	,8	4,9	,5	8,4	0,5		
9- I discuss with my co-workers in order to provide reconciliation.	**fi**	0	4	3	6	2	,63	1 ,43711
	Y.fi	4,0	1,2	0,7	6,0	8,1		
10- I generally abstain from discussing my different opinions with my subordinates.	**fi**	5	0	,7	4	8	,69	1,28133
	Y.fi	,0	8,6		9,1	1,6		
11- I try not to disagree with my co-workers**.**	**fi**	7	09	3	9	7	,95	1,40682
	Y.fi	,9	0,7	,0	,8	6,5		
12- I abstain objection towards my co-workers.	**fi**	2	5	7	9	2	,46	1,34549
	Y.fi	4,2	4,2	,9	,8	4,9		
13- I try not to reveal my disagreement with my co-workers in order not to cause disappointmet.	**fi**	0	08	9	4	4	,60	1,22969
	Y.fi	4,0	0,2	,8	5,8	1,2		
14- I try to abstain negative interactions with my co-workers.	**fi**	0	03	3	6	3	,66	1,13885
	Y.fi	,3	7,9	0,0	2,1	0,7		

Factor Analysis

According to the exploratory factor analysis (Table 4), the Conflict Management Scale was collected under 5 dimensions. These dimensions have been named as *integration, domination, abstaining, comprimising and reconciliation* as in the original scale. While *integration* dimension explains the Conflict Management Scale with a percentage of 14,373, the dimension of *domination* explains with a percentage of 12,442. The dimension of *abstaining* explains the scale with a dimension of 11,970 and the dimension of *compromising* with a percentage of 11,423. As for the *reconciliation* dimension, it explains the scale with a percentage of 11,293 The cumulative percentage of all 5 dimensions was found as 61,500. The fact that the explained variance is over %50 percent of the total variance is an important criterion in terms of the fact that it represents the scale (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017).

Table 4: Explained Total Variance

	Calculated Sum of Squares			Rotated Sum of Squares		
Component	Total	% Variance	Cumulative%	Total	%Variance	Cumulative%
1	1,744	15,584	15,584	1,581	14,373	14,373
2	1,565	14,227	30,081	1,369	12,442	26,815
3	1,208	10,985	41,066	1,317	11,970	38,785
4	1,178	10,711	51,777	1,256	11,423	50,207
5	1,070	9,723	61,500	1,242	11,293	61,500

Field (2000) stated that 0,50 should be the lower limit for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test and that the data set cannot be factored for KMO≤0.50. In addition, the Bartlett's Test should be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). According to KMO and Bartlett's Test (Table 5), the data is appropriate for factor analysis.

Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	,537
Sig.	,000

Comparative Statistics

Because of the fact that the distribution of data is not normal according to the normality (Kolmogorov-Simirnov) test (Table 6), non-parametric Mann-Whitney U and non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to analyze whether there was a statistical difference in the answers given by the participants according to their socio-demographic findings regarding the dimensions obtained as a result of the factor analysis (Table 7). According to the analysis results, there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) only between gender characteristic and abstaining dimension, age chracteristic and comprimising dimension, education characteristic and domination dimension and field of study characteristic and abstaining dimension. On the other hand, it is found out that, there is not a statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between the demographic characteristics of the participants (age, gender, education, field of study) and all other dimensions of the scale.

Hence, H_1 hypothesis, *there is statistically significant difference between gender characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management* $h1: \mu 1 > \mu 2$, **is rejected,**

H_2 hypothesis, *there is statistically significant difference between age characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management* h2: μ1> μ2, **is rejected,**

H_3 hypothesis, *there is statistically significant difference between education characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management* h3: μ1> μ2, **is rejected,**

H_4 hypothesis, *there is statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic field of study characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management* h4: μ1> μ2, ***is rejected,***

H_0 hypothesis, *there is not a statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic (gender, age, education, field of study) characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes towards Conflict Management* h0: μ1> μ2, **is accepted.**

Table 6: One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Conflict Management Inventory	,258	215	,000

Table 7: Comparative Statistics

Variable	Dimension	Test	Statistics	P
Gender	Integration	Mann-Whitney U	3745,000	,057
	Domination		4473,000	,940
	Abstaining		3603,500	,023
	Comprimising		4182,000	,419
	Reconciliation		4259,000	,538
Age	Integration	Kruskal-Wallis	7,670	,104
	Domination		8,632	,071
	Abstaining		8,861	,065
	Comprimising		22,565	,000
	Reconciliation		5,808	,214
Education	Integration	Kruskal-Wallis	2,772	,096
	Domination		4,774	,029
	Abstaining		2,930	,087
	Comprimising		,539	,463
	Reconciliation		2,401	,121
Field of Study	Integration	Kruskal-Wallis	2,872	,579
	Domination		5,504	,239
	Abstaining		13,955	,007
	Comprimising		2,679	,613
	Reconciliation		5,193	,268

Conclusion

Today, the increasing competition conditions in the globalizing world with the developing technology have brought about differences in the expectations related to working life such as the regulations in the organizational structures, the time spent at the workplace and the work-family life balance. In every environment where people interact, differences in various dimensions such as perception, purpose, attitude, value, knowledge and skill will emerge. The person creates emotional, intellectual and behavioral reactions by processing the data obtained from the environment within the scope of these frameworks (Seval, 2006).

The individual, who is a part of life collectively, reflects these differences in the work environment. Conflict between employees, who are always interacting in business life, will be an

inevitable result. In the simplest terms, individuals can experience emotions, thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, etc. differ in many points, and these differences cause conflicts at various levels and types (Akkirman, 1998). However, in order for the organization to survive, these conflict sources must be managed correctly and maximum efficiency must be obtained from the employee.

According to the results of the analysis of the current study, there is not a statistically significant difference between socio-demographical characteristics of private primary school teachers and their attitudes and perceptions towards Conflict Management. Therefore, it can be understood as an implication of the fact that the conflict management styles are not comprehended thoroughly in the sample schools, which implies a suggestion for the school managements for dwelling on conflict management. However, it is found out that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between gender characteristic and abstaining dimension, age characteristic and comprimising dimension, education characteristic and domination dimension and field of study characteristic and abstaining dimension. In this sense, when the results are overviewed, it can be understood that female teachers and foreign languages teachers do not abstain from conflicts; in 26-34 age group, teachers prefer comprimising in disagreements and college graduates prefer to be dominant when a conflict occurs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the teachers that belong to these mentioned demographical characteristics, are more aware of the conflicts in addition to being aware of conflict management styles.

Although the negative conditions of pandemic have decreased, it still continues and the fact that all the educational organizations continued the classes as remote-teaching for almost 2 years, unbalanced the classical systems of each school. Therefore it is almost inevitable to face with several conflicts. In addition, the fact that the educational organizations have started face-to-face teaching again, the factors such as hygien, distance, wearing masks, education quality, meeting schedules, class schedules, teacher-student integration, parent-teacher integration etc. have started to cause new conflicts. In this sense, especially the answers to the items of the scale are heavily insists agreement, integration and reconciliation with co-workers, these kinds of results can be interpreted as “expectation-filled”. In this sense, it can be concluded that the participants try to refrain from all kinds of conflicts. In addition, when the fact that this research is conducted on private school teachers is considered, the fear of losing their jobs can be evaluated as an effective factor. It can be possible that the teachers can feel that the remote education can cause them to lose their jobs, because of the fact that digitalization in education is growing in a fast pace. In this context, this situation can be effective on the participant teachers’ attitudes towards conflict management.

For further researches, especially after pandemic situations of teachers in terms their attitudes towards conflict management in both private and public schools, should be given importance. Because all the educational world have started to act in a new phase and thus, the educational theories and the results of the previous researches have started to change. Therefore this study is expected to shed light to the further researchers and both head teachers and teachers in terms of enhancing their schools and make their teachers and co-workers teach in a conflict free environment or in an environment in which the conflicts are solved in professional and integrative ways. Thus, the students will have the chance of having better education in terms of all educational factors.

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