Eurasian Journal of Educational Research 68 (2017) 167-186

Eurasian Journal of Educational Research
www.ejer.com.tr

Relationship between Communication Competence and Conflict Management Styles of School Principals

Tevfik UZUN [1] Ahmet AYIK [2]

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received: 6 January 2016
Received in revised form: 2 February 2017
Accepted: 14 April 2017
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2017.68.9

Keywords
teacher perceptions
empathy, support, integration,
avoiding, dominating.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Determining the relationship between communication competence and conflict management styles of school principals, according to teacher perceptions, is important for school principals to effectively manage and foster a positive school environment. Conflicts are inevitable in all types of schools. Managing conflicts and maintaining collaborations between partners are among the numerous responsibilities of school principals. This study may provide some practical evidence for school administrators and principals to manage and solve conflicts. **Research Methods**: Relational survey models were used in the study. "The Communication Competence Scale" and "the Organizational Conflict Scale" were applied to attain data on 245 teachers working in primary schools.

Findings: A meaningful relationship between communication competence of school principals and their conflict management styles was determined. It showed that the communication competence of school principals predicted their conflict management styles, according to teacher perceptions. **Implications for Research and Practice**: The findings reveal that teachers think that principals use avoiding and obliging styles at a medium level. When these styles are used to manage conflicts, the same problems may repeat in time. In this sense, school principals need to keep in mind that a current problem may be a source/potential of future problems. Therefore, it is suggested that school principals use avoiding and obliging styles less often.

© 2017 Ani Publishing Ltd. All rights reserved

[1] Giresun University, TURKEY
[2] Ataturk University, TURKEY
Corresponding Author: Tevfik Uzun, Giresun University, Giresun Faculty of Education, tevfik.uzun@giresun.edu.tr.

Introduction

In recent years, communication has been an important research subject in the administration field. Communication is a process of interaction in which individuals construct meanings and derivations via symbols (Wood, 2011, p. 3–4). According to Fielding (2006, p. 10), communication is an operation created with transactions of symbols by participants. Communication has personal, organisational, and social functions, such as informing, supervising, guiding, transmitting knowledge and skills, educating, integrating, expressing feelings, setting up social relationships, reducing anxiety and solving problems, giving performance feedback, entertaining, warning, assuming necessary roles, information sharing, persuading, and expressing emotions and innovations (Wood, 2012; Champoux, 2010; Tutar & Yilmaz, 2010). The communication process is one of the most significant processes concerning the success of administrators and the effectiveness of organisations, as it is a basic tool for an administrator to successfully accomplish tasks (Kocel, 2013, p. 403). The communication skills of administrators come into prominence when carrying out administrative activities. Studies have been implemented to determine the communication skills of school principals (Wee, 2011; Helmer, 2013; Uzun & Ayik, 2015). In the literature, conflict management has been discussed between teacher and student, principal and teacher, and among teachers (Cornille, Pestle & Vanwy, 1999; Laca, Alzate, Sanchez, Verdugo & Guzman, 2006; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Somech, 2008; Ikoya & Akınseindre, 2009; Ageng'a & Simatwa, 2011; Msila, 2012; Pinchevsky & Bogler, 2014).

Human beings are social creatures that communicate with numerous individuals throughout their lives. During this interaction, conflicts may occur among individuals due to countless reasons. Conflict may be defined as disagreements through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests, or concerns (Polger, Poole and Stutman, 2013, p. 4; Tallo, 2008, p. 275). Putnam and Poole (1987, p. 552) defines conflict as "the interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims, and values, and who see the other as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals". Conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party (Wall and Callister, 1995). According to Thomas (1992), conflict is the process that begins when one party perceives that another has aggravated, or is about to aggravate, some concern of his. Upon analysing definitions about conflict, it is seen that the main factors of conflict are incompatibility, inscrutability, contradiction, being opposite to each other, prevention, and clash of ideas (Guney, 2011). The conflict process consists of five phases: potential contradiction or incompatibility, perception and personalisation, intentions, behaviours, and outputs (Robbins & Judge, 2012, p. 457). Conflict may have many several reasons to occur in any organisation. Upon analysing the literature, it is seen that the factors causing conflict are reasons related to communication, organisational structure, and personal behaviours (Wall and Callister, 1995; Tallo, 2008; Eunson, 2012; Griffin, 2013). "Conflict management at the organisational level is defined as finding a solution for the conflicts occurring in an organisation or within organisations, which will add

value to the aims and objectives of an organisation," (Guney, 2011, p. 307). "Preventing organisational conflicts is one of the major problems that administration encounters. However, conflicts are such to be managed" (Genc, 2007, p. 279).

There are different methods and styles used to manage conflicts in the literature. Five different methods by Blake and Mouton (1964) are described to be used to manage and solve conflicts: competing, accommodating, avoiding, compromising, and collaborating (cited by Sokmen & Yazicioglu, 2005, p. 7). Another conflict management approach, by Rahim and Bonoma (1979), is a two-dimensional approach that deals with interpersonal conflict management styles. The approach consists of two dimensions as an attempt to satisfy one's own concerns and attempt to satisfy the concerns of the other person." "The approach consists of five conflict management styles as integrating, obliging, avoiding, dominating, and compromise (Rahim & Magner, 1995; Rahim, 2002).

The integrating style consists of high interest from both an individual and the other person. This style is related to the collaboration of both sides in a conflict on subjects such as openness, information sharing, and analysing differences (Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style presumes coordination between managers and employees on an open, sharing ground. For example, a school principal meets the conflicting parties and negotiates probable solutions in an open, trusting way. The parties see the problem, reason with each other, and try to figure out various solutions regarding the problem.

The obliging style is about demonstrating a low concern for self and a high concern for others. This style is about the individual attempts to play down the differences and emphasise commonalities to satisfy the concern of others. A person who exercises the obliging style puts aside his own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other party (Rahim, 2002). This style regards figuring out various solutions to be meaningless, which causes principals at schools to exercise caution towards conflictive solutions.

The dominating style is about demonstrating a high concern for self and a low concern for others. This style is identified with a win-lose orientation, and the expectations and needs of others are generally neglected in this style (Rahim, 2002). This style is about a school principal who aligns with one side and ignoring the needs and expectations of the other.

The avoiding style is related to a low concern for self and others. In this style, the individual tends to withdraw or sidestep. Individuals who have this style fail to satisfy his or her concerns and those of others. This style defines a school principal who refrains from solving the problem, and taking no responsibility for resolving the conflict.

The compromising style comprises intermediate concern for self and others. Both sides give up something to arrive at a mutually acceptable decision. This style can be useful if the both parties are equally powerful. This style may not be appropriate for a complex issue requiring a problem-solving approach (Rahim, 2002). This style

covers negotiation between the parties involved, as a school principal finds a moderate solution, which is to be accepted by the two conflicting parties. Thomas (1992) set his conflict management styles on two axes, labelled as "cooperativeness" and "assertiveness". This model involves five different styles of conflict: competing, avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, and compromising.

According to research, there is a relationship between the conflict management and problem-solving styles of school administrators and their leadership abilities (Dogan, 2012), instructional leadership (Arslantas & Ozkan, 2012), personality traits (Karakus & Cankaya 2009; Akinnubi, Oyeran, Fashuki & Durosaro, 2012), the environment of the organisation (Tanriverdi, 2008), stress and anger management (Gunduz, Tunc & İnandi, 2013), anger styles (Argon & Acikgoz, 2010), school climate (Boucher, 2013), and coercive and legitimate power (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2016).

Upon analysing the literature, it can be seen that numerous studies have analysed the relationship between the communicational behaviours of the school administrators and their conflict management styles (Tabor, 2001; Sahin, 2007; Tekkanat, 2009; Firat, 2010; Demirkaya, 2012). A similar study has also analysed the relationship between the communication competence of school administrators and organisational conflict (Topluer, 2008).

Conflict management requires an interaction between a moderator and the third parties. Principals are a third party in solving a conflict among employees. When principals intervene, they start an interaction. Verbal and non-verbal communication from both principals and the conflicting parties affect this interaction. During the process, principals should listen to the parties carefully and try to show empathy. Principals should be able to give effective feedback and persuade the parties by affecting them. In order to achieve this, principals should demonstrate communication competences like effective listening and speaking, and showing empathy and understanding. Furthermore, employees think that conflict management is one the most important skills among the communication competences of a school principal. It is a fact that the relationship between communication competences and conflict management skills of principals is crucial for both effective management and a positive school environment.

Conflict in a school environment is inevitable. This study can provide applicable findings for school administrators and principals to manage and solve conflicts. In particular, considering the key role of the communication in interpersonal relations and the importance of conflict management styles in solving conflicts, it is expected that the findings of the study will provide a positive contribution to the literature. Within this framework, the following questions will be addressed:

1. At what level is the communication competence of the school principals, according to teacher perceptions?
2. What are the conflict management styles of the school principals, according to teacher perceptions?

3. Are there meaningful relationships between communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals?
4. Does the communication competence of the school principals predict their conflict management styles at a meaningful level?

Method

Research Design

The present study is a correlational study that aims to determine the relationship between communication competency and conflict management styles of school principals. A correlational survey model was used as the main research approach.

Research Sample

The population of the study consisted of teachers working in 53 elementary schools in Palandoken County, Erzurum, in the 2012-2013 academic year. There are 950 teachers at these schools, and the study sample involved 245 teachers determined by the simple random sampling method from 15 elementary schools in Palandoken County. Random sampling means that everyone has the same chance to be included in the sampling. In order to implement simple random sampling, it is a must to know and list the population units. Then, these units are picked until the specified size has been reached (Buyukozturk, Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2014). In accordance with this method, 53 schools were listed and 15 of them were selected. As the next step, the number of teachers in these schools was listed, and the teachers were selected randomly. These teachers were given research forms and 245 forms were thought to be worthy of evaluation. Of the 245 teachers, 125 (51%) were females and 120 (49%) were males; 46 (18.8%) of these teachers had 1-5 years' experience, 52 (21.2%) had 6-10 years' experience, 62 (25.3%) had 11-15 years' experience, and 85 (34.7%) had 16 years and more of professional seniority.

Research Instruments and Procedures

"The Communication Competence Scale" developed by Wiemann (1977) and "The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II" developed by Rahim (1983) were used in the study.

Communication Competence Scale. The Communicative Competence Scale, developed by Wiemann (1977), involves 36 items and five sub-dimensions in its original form. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Topluer (2007). As a result of an exploratory factor analysis, Topluer (2008) stated that the 36 items have five dimensions. However, there is only one item under the fifth dimension, and only two under the fourth. In addition, as the factor load was calculated to be high under more than one dimension, five items were omitted. The remaining 31 items were subjected to varimax rotation, and the factor analysis was repeated. After the procedure, the scale was found to contain three sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are parallel to the original scale: empathy (17 items), social relaxation (7 items) and

affiliation/support (7 items). The scale was composed of a 5-point Likert Scale. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the scale and its sub-dimensions was found to be .95 in the "empathy" dimension, .76 in the "social relaxation" dimension, and .79 in the "affiliation/support" dimension.

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II), developed by Rahim (1983), was used to determine the conflict management styles of the school principals. The inventory has 28 items, composed of a 5-point Likert Scale. The five sub-dimensions of the inventory are as follows: integration (6 items), obliging (5 items), dominating (5 items), avoiding (6 items), and compromising (6 items). The inventory was adapted to Turkish by Gumuseli (1994). The inventory used in the study has been obtained from Tanriverdi (2008).

The reliability analysis of ROCI-II was redone for the study and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to .91. Cronbach's Alpha of the inventory that determines each conflict management style was .91 for the integrating dimension, .77 for the obliging dimension, .72 for the dominating dimension, .73 for the avoiding dimension, and .89 for the compromising dimension. These values show that the reliability of the inventory is high.

Data Analysis

To identify the communication competence and conflict management skills of the school principals, arithmetic means were calculated. In addition, to determine the relationship between communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals, the Pearson Moment Correlation method was implemented. Furthermore, to determine whether the communication competence of the school principals predicts their conflict management styles, a multiple regression analysis was performed.

Results

The findings related to the communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals, in accordance with the perceptions of the participants, are indicated in Table 1.

According to teacher perceptions in the working group, when analysing distributions related to communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals, the highest value mean is observed to be (M: 3.88) in the affiliating/support dimension, while the lowest value mean is (M: 3.85) in the social relaxation dimension in terms of communication competence. Upon looking through the distributions related to conflict management styles, it is seen that the highest value mean is (M: 3.79) in the integrating dimension, while the lowest is (M: 2.75) in the dominating dimension.

Table 1

Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation Values Related to the Dimensions of Communication Competence and Conflict Management Styles

Communication Competence	***M***	***SD***
1. Empathy	3.86	.68
2. Social Relaxation	3.85	.58
3. Affiliation/Support	3.88	.65
Conflict Management Styles	***M***	***SD***
1. Integration	3.79	.83
2. Obliging	3.35	.77
3. Dominating	2.75	.82
4. Avoiding	3.32	.73
5. Compromising	3.58	.89

The Pearson product-moment correlation method was used to determine the relationship between the communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals, and the results are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2.

Relationship between Communication Competence and Conflict Management Styles of School Principals

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Empathy	-							
2. Soc. Relaxation	.87**	-						
3. Aff./Support	.64**	.45**	-					
4. Integration	.88**	.73**	.59**	-				
5. Obliging	.75**	.59**	.35**	.85**	-			
6. Dominating	-.24**	-.11	-.62**	-.28**	-.12**	-		
7. Avoiding	.52**	.40**	.23**	.59**	.63**	.07	-	
8. Compromising	.80**	.61	.53**	.93	.84**	-.22**	.67**	-

n=245, **p<.01, *p<.05

Upon analysing Table 2, a meaningful relationship can be observed between communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals

based on the perceptions of the teachers who participated in the study. There is a positive relationship between the understanding, empathy, social relaxation, and support dimensions of the communication competence scale, and the integrating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising dimensions of the conflict management scale. r values range between .23 and .81. The relationship between the understanding, empathy, and support dimensions of the communication competence scale and dominating dimension of the conflict management scale is found to be negative. r values range between -.24 and -62.

Prediction of integrating dimension. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the integrating dimension are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3.

Regression Analysis Results related to Prediction of Integrating Dimension

Variable	*B*	*Sh*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Fixed	-.189	.200	-	-.943	.346
Empathy	1.212	.092	.994	13.135	.000*
Social Relaxation	-.207	.093	-.144	-2.232	.027*
Affiliation/Support	.025	.053	.019	.464	.643

F (3.245) = 287.667, p<.05, R= .884, R^2=.782

As seen in Table 3, the empathy dimension (β=.994, p<.01) of the communication competence scale predicts the perceptions of the participants related to the integrating dimension of the conflict management style inventory in a positive way and at a meaningful level. Furthermore, it is seen that the social relaxation dimension (β= -.144, p<.05) predicts the perceptions of the participants related to the integrating dimension of the conflict management style inventory in a negative way and at a meaningful level. However, the affiliation/support dimension (β=.019, p>.05) of the communication competence scale is not a meaningful predictor of the integrating dimension of the conflict management style inventory. All the dimensions of the communication competence scale together explain 78% of the total variance of the perception of the participants about the integration dimension of the conflict management style inventory.

Prediction of obliging dimension. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the obliging dimension are indicated in Table 4.

Table 4

Regression Analysis Results related to Prediction of Obliging Dimension

Variable	*B*	*Sh*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Fixed	1.259	.232	-	5.431	.000
Empathy	1.537	.107	1.372	14.392	.000*
Social Relaxation	-.601	.107	-.455	-5.591	.000*
Affiliation/Support	-.395	.062	-.334	-6.395	.000*

F (3.245) = 151.774, p<.05, R= .809, R^2=.654

As seen in Table 4, the empathy dimension (β=1.372, p<.01) of the communication competence scale predicts the perceptions of the participants related to the obliging dimension of the conflict management style inventory in a positive way and at a meaningful level. Furthermore, the social relaxation (β=-.455, p<.01) and affiliation/support (β=-.334, p<.01) dimensions predict the perceptions of the participants related to the obliging dimension of the conflict management style inventory in a negative way and at a meaningful level. All the dimensions of the communication competence scale together explain 65% of the total variance of the perception of the participants about the obliging dimension of the conflict management style inventory.

Prediction of dominating dimension. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the dominating dimension are indicated in Table 5.

Table 5

Regression Analysis Results related to Prediction of Dominating Dimension

Variable	*B*	*Sh*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Fixed	5.300	.319	-	16.613	.000
Empathy	.236	.147	.197	1.609	.109
Social Relaxation	.105	.148	.074	.714	.476
Affiliation/Support	-.994	.085	-.784	-11.704	.000*

F (3.245) = 60.969, p<.05, R= .657, R^2=.431

As seen in Table 5, the affiliation/support dimension (β=-.784, p<.01) of the communication competence scale predicts the perceptions of the participants related to the dominating dimension of the conflict management style inventory in a negative way and at a meaningful level. However, the empathy (β=.197, p>.05) and social relaxation (β=.197, p>.05) dimensions are not predictors of the dominating dimension of the conflict management style inventory. All the dimensions of the communication competence scale together explain 43% of the total variance of the

perception of the participants about the dominating dimension of the conflict management style inventory.

Prediction of avoiding dimension. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the avoiding dimension are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6.

Regression Analysis Results related to Prediction of Avoiding Dimension

Variable	*B*	*Sh*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Fixed	2.067	.309	-	6.695	.000
Empathy	1.104	.142	1.029	7.763	.000*
Social Relaxation	-.478	.143	-.378	-3.339	.001*
Affiliation/Support	-.300	.082	-.265	-3.643	.000*

F (3.245) = 39.636, p<.05, R=.575, R^2=.330

As seen in Table 6, while the empathy dimension (β=1.029, p<.01) of the communication competence scale predicts the perceptions of the participants related to the avoiding dimension of the conflict management style inventory in a positive way and at a meaningful level, the social relaxation (β=-.378, p<.01) and affiliation/support (β=-.265, p<.01) dimensions predict it in a negative way and at a meaningful level. All the dimensions of the communication competence scale together explain 33% of the total variance of the perception of the participants about the avoiding dimension of the conflict management style inventory.

Prediction of compromising dimension. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the compromising dimension are indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

Regression Analysis Results related to Prediction of Compromising Dimension

Variable	*B*	*Sh*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Fixed	.297	.258	-	1.150	.251
Empathy	1.553	.119	1.196	13.071	.000*
Social Relaxation	-.616	.120	-.403	-5.154	.000*
Affiliation/Support	-.088	.069	-.064	-1.278	.203

F (3.245) = 171.295, p<.05, R= .825, R^2=.681

As seen in Table 7, the affiliation/support (β=.64, p>.05) dimension of the communication competence scale is not a predictor of the compromising dimension of conflict management styles. The empathy (β=1.196, p<.01) dimension of the communication competence scale predicts teacher perceptions related to the

compromising dimension of the conflict management style inventory in a positive way and at a meaningful level. Furthermore, it is seen that the social relaxation (β=-.403, p<.01) dimension predicts the teacher perceptions related to the compromising dimension of the conflict management styles inventory in a negative way and at a meaningful level. All the dimensions of the communication competence scale together explain 68% of the total variance of the perception of the participants about the compromising dimension of the conflict management style inventory.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the relationship between the communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals has been analysed in accordance with teacher perceptions. According to the results of the study, there is a relationship between the communication competence and conflict management styles of the school managers, according to teacher perceptions, and the communication competence of the school principals predicts their conflict management styles.

Based on the perceptions of the teachers in the working group, upon analysing the distributions related to the communication competence level of the school principals, it is seen that the highest average is in the affiliation/support dimension in terms of the communication competence scale dimensions, while the lowest is in the social relaxation dimension. The findings related to communication competence show that the communication competence levels of the school managers are adequately and highly perceived, according to teacher perceptions. The findings of the study related to communication competence are parallel to the studies of Tabor (2001), Jones (2006), Topluer (2008), Sahin (2007), Demirkaya (2012), and Uzun & Ayik (2015). These studies were conducted to observe the communication competence of school principals based on the perceptions of elementary and secondary school teachers, and they stated that the communication competence of the school principals was high.

The findings revealed that school principals use integrating skills "highly" in managing conflicts. This result is also confirmed by the findings of Sahin (2007); Tanriverdi (2008), Acikgoz (2009), and Kocak and Atanur-Baskan (2013). Principals use the avoiding and obliging styles at a "medium" level when managing conflict. These findings have previously been verified by the works of Tanriverdi (2008), Acikgoz (2009), and Kocak and Atanur-Baskan (2013). Principals using compromising and dominating styles at a "medium" level in conflict management has also been examined by Sahin (2007). According to the perceptions of the teachers in the working group, upon analysing the results related to the conflict management styles of the school principals, the highest average can be seen is in the integrating dimension, while the lowest is in the dominating dimension. These findings are completely parallel to the findings of Topluer (2008), Acikgoz (2009), and Arslantas and Ozkan (2012), determining that school principals use integrating the most and dominating the least in conflict management; these findings are partially parallel to those of Tanriverdi (2008), stating that school principals use integrating styles the

most in the conflicts with teachers, according to teacher perceptions. Karakus and Cankaya (2009), Firat (2010), and Kocak and Atanur-Baskan (2013) stated that school administrators use integrating styles the most. These findings are parallel to the results of this study.

According to the findings of the study, there is a meaningful relationship between the teacher perceptions and the communication competence and conflict management styles of the school principals. A meaningful, positive relationship has been found between the empathy, social relaxation, and affiliation/support dimensions of the communication competence scale, and the integrating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising dimensions of the conflict management style inventory. However, a meaningful, negative relationship was found between the empathy dimension of the communication competence scale and the dominating dimension of the conflict management style inventory, and between the affiliation/support dimension and the dominating dimension. After evaluating the findings, the degree of communication competence shows that the concern for both parties is high, and it increases the use of the styles in which collaboration is dominant. The highest positive relationship with communication competence was observed is in the integrating style, followed by the compromising style. The results prove that the hypothetical information and the data obtained through conducting the questionnaires are consistent with each other. Analysing the literature, the findings of the studies conducted by Tabor (2001), Tekkanat (2009), Sahin (2007), Firat (2010), and Demirkaya (2012) correspond to the findings of this study. In addition, these findings are parallel to the findings of Corn (2013), Ustuner and Kis (2014), and Okcu, Dogan, and Dayanan, (2016).

According to the findings of the study, the empathy dimension of the communication competence scale predicts the perceptions of the participants towards the integrating, avoiding, obliging, and compromising dimensions of the conflict management style inventory in a positive way and at a meaningful level. Yet, the empathy dimension is not a meaningful predictor of the dominating dimension. Furthermore, the social relaxation dimension of the communication competence scale predicts the perceptions of the participants towards the integrating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising dimensions of the conflict management style inventory in a negative way and at a meaningful level. However, the social relaxation dimension is not a meaningful predictor of the dominating dimension. The findings of the study show that the affiliation/support dimension of the communicative competence scale predicts the perceptions of the participants towards the obliging, avoiding, and dominating dimensions of the conflict management inventory in a negative way and at a meaningful level. The affiliation/support dimension is not a meaningful predictor of the integrating and compromising dimensions. The findings show that the communication competence of the school principals is a significant predictor in conflict management. Therefore, it can be said that effective communication is a key factor in managing and solving conflicts. It can also be understood from the obtained data that school administrators who have an elevated level of communication competence can manage conflicts more effectively. Upon

analysing the literature, it can be seen that the findings of the studies executed by Sahin (2007), Firat (2010), Okcu, Dogan and Dayanan, (2016), and Ustuner and Kis (2014) are parallel to the findings of this study. After making a general evaluation based on the findings of this study, it can be said that there is a relationship between modes of communication and conflict management styles in terms of teacher perceptions, and the mode of communication that school administrators use predicts their conflict management styles.

In accordance with the findings, the following suggestions are recommended:

The findings reveal that the teachers think that the principals exercise avoiding and obliging styles at a medium level. When these styles are used in managing conflicts, the same problems may repeat in time. In this sense, school principals need to keep in mind that the current problem may be a source/potential of future problems. Therefore, it is suggested that school principals use avoiding and obliging styles less often.

It is found that teachers think that principals exercise dominating styles at a medium level. Principals tend to find temporary solutions to the problems via legal power that they possess, when principals need to keep in mind that teachers may be forced to work, which may foster a negative perception. This means that principals need to use dominating styles less often in managing conflicts.

The results show that principals use compromising styles at a medium level. This style regards a common way for all the conflicting parties negotiate with each other. Hence, this style needs to be used more often. For future research, it is recommended that the relationship between the school principals' conflict management styles and the teachers' job satisfaction, performance, motivation, and school culture and climate may be studied.

References

Ageng'a, R. A., & Simatwa, M.W. E. (2011). Assessment of conflict management and resolution in public secondary schools in Kenya: A case study of Nyakach District. *Educational Research,* Vol. 2 (4), 1074-1088.

Akinnubi, P. O., Oyeniran, S., Fashiku O.C., & Durosaro, A. I. (2012). Principal's personal characteristics and conflict management in kwara state secondary schools, Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. 2 (6), 167-174.

Argon, T. & Acıkgoz, A. (2010). İlkogretim okulu yoneticilerinin catisma yaklasimlari ve ofke ifade tarzlari [Primary school administrators' conflict approaches and their anger expressions]. *e-Journal of New World Sciences Academy Education Sciences*, 5, (2), 501-520.

Arslantas, İ. H. & Ozkan, M. (2012). Okul mudurlerinin catisma cozmede yapici – yikici olmaları ile ogretim liderligi arasındaki iliski [The relationshıp between school principles' instructıonal leadership and their use of constructive and destructive dimensions of conflıct management]. *Dumlupinar Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 34, 231-240.

Boucher, M. M. (2013). *The relationship of principal conflict management style and school climate*, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of South Carolına, USA.

Buyukozturk, S., Cakmak, K.E., Akgun, E. O., Karadeniz, S. & Demirel (2014). Bilimsel arastirma yontemleri [Scientific research methods]. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayincilik

Champoux, E. J. (2010). *Organizational Behavior: Integrating individuals, hroups, and organizations.* New York: Routledge

Corn, S. (2013). *Superiors'conflict management behaviors and its relationship to their level of communicative competence* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), The University of Akron, USA.

Cornille, T. A., Pestle, R. E., & Vanwy, R. W. (1999). Teachers' conflıct management styles wıth peers and students'parents. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* 10(1), 69-79.

Demirkaya, Y. (2012). *Okul mudurlerinin catisma yonetimi stratejileri ve iletisim tarzlarına yonelik ogretmen algilari [Teacher perceptions about conflict management strategies and communication styles of school principals].* (Unpublished master's thesis), Mehmet Akif Ersoy Universitesi, Egitim Bilimleri Enstitusu, Burdur.

Dogan, S. (2012). İlkogretim okulu yoneticilerinin liderlik stilleri ile kullandiklari catisma cozum stratejileri arasındaki iliski [Relationship between leadership styles of the primary school principals and used the conflict resolution strategies]. *Egitim ve Ogretim Arastırmaları Dergisi*, 1 (4), 226-233.

Eunson, B. (2012). *Conflict management.* Australia: John Wiley & Sons.

Fielding, M. (2006). *Effective communication in organisations*. Cape Town: Juta Academic Lansdowne.

Firat, S. (2010). *Ogretmen algılarına gore ortaogretim okul mudurlerinin kullandiklari catısma yonetimi stratejilerinin bazi degiskenlere gore incelenmesi [Investigating school principles' conflict management strategies in terms of some variables according to instructors' perceptions].* (Unpublished master's thesis), Ege Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu, İzmir.

Folger, J. P., & Stutman, R. K. (2013). *Catisma yonetimi [Working through conflict].* (F. Akkoyun, Edt. and Trans), İstanbul: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

Helmer, C. B. (2013). *Effect of prıncıpals' communıcatıon on female elementary school teachers' perceptıon of morale and student learnıng.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation),Texas A&M University-Commerce, Texas.

Genc, N. (2007). *Yonetim ve organizasyon [Management and organization].* Ankara: Seckin Yayincilik.

Griffin, R. W. (2013). *Fundamentals of management.* Boston: Cengage Learning.

Gumuseli, A. İ. (1994). *İzmir ortaogretim okullari yoneticilerinin ogretmenler ile aralarındaki catismaları yonetme bicimleri [The conflict management.style of secondary school administrators with teacher in İzmir].* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Ankara Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu, Ankara.

Gunduz, B., Tunc İ. & İnandı Y. (2013). Okul yoneticilerinin ofke ve stresle basa cıkma yaklasimları ile catısma yonetimi stilleri arasındaki iliski [The relationship between the school administrators' anger control and stress coping methods and their conflict management style]. *International Journal of Human Sciences,* 10(1), 641-660.

Guney, S. (2011). *Orgutsel davranis [Organizational behavior].* Ankara: Nobel Yayin Dagıtım.

Ikoya, O. P. & Akinseinde, I. S. (2009). Variability pattern in conflict management strategies among school administrators of secondary schools in Nigeria. *J Soc Sci,* 20(3), 223-230.

Karakus, M. & Cankaya, H. İ. (2009). Okul yoneticilerinin kisilik ozelliklerinin catisma cozme stratejileri uzerindeki etkisi [The influence of school managers' personality traits on their conflict resolution strategies]. *Adıyaman Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu Dergisi*, 2 (3), 111-118.

Kocak, S. & Atanur-Baskan, G. (2013). Okul mudurleri tarafindan kullanilan catisma yonetim yontemlerinin etkililik duzeyleri [The effeciıveness levels of conflict management methotds used by school administrators]. *Hacettepe Universitesi Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi,* 44, 212-224

Kocel, T. (2013). *İsletme yoneticiligi [Business management*]. İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım Dagıtım.

Laca, A. F., Alzate T., Sanchez M., Verdugo C. J., & Guzman J. (2006). Communication and conflict in young Mexican students: messages and attitudes. *Conflict Resolutıon Quarterly,* 24 (1), 31-54.

Morris-Rothschild, B. K., & Brassard, M. R. (2006). Teachers' conflict management styles: The role of attachment styles and classroom management efficacy. *Journal of School Psychology*, *44*(2), 105-121.

Msila, V. (2012). Conflict Management and School Leadership. *J Communication,* 3 (1) 25-34.

Okcu, V., Dogan, E. & Dayanan, İ. (2016). İlk ve ortaokul ogretmenlerinin algilarina gore okul yoneticilerinin iletisim becerileri ile catisma yonetim stilleri arasındaki iliskinin incelenmesi [Examining the relationship between communication skills and conflict management styles of school administrators according to perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers]. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Egitim Yonetimi,* 22(2), 217-244.

Pinchevsky, N. & Bogler, R. (2014). The ınfluence of teachers' perceived self-efficacy and role ımpact on their preferences in adopting strategies to resolve conflict situations with students. *ISEA,* 42 (2), 111-125.

Putnam, L.L. & Poole, M.S. (1987). Conflict and negotiation. In F.M. Jablin, L.L. Putnam, K.H. Roberts & L.W. Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication: An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 549-599). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Robbins, S. P. & Judge, T. A. (2012). *Orgutsel davranis [Organizational behavior].* (İ. Erdem, Edt. and Trans), İstanbul: Nobel Akademik Yayincilik.

Rahim, M. A. & Bonoma, T. V. (1979). Managing organizational conflict: A model for diagnosis and intervention. *Psychological Reports,* 44, 1323-1344.

Rahim, M. A. & Magner, N. R. (1995). Confirmatory factor analysis of the styles of handling interpersonal conlict: first-order factor model and its invariance across groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 80, 122-132.

Rahim, M. A. (2002). Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. *The International Journal of Conflict Management,* 13 (3), 206-235.

Riasi, A., & Asadzadeh, N. (2016). How coercive and legitimate power relate to different conflict management styles: a case study of birjand high schools. *Journal of Studies in Education*, *6*(1), 147-159.

Somech, A. (2008). Managing conflict in school teams: the ımpact of task and goal ınterdependence on conflict management and team effectiveness. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 44 (3), 359-390.

Sokmen, A. & Yazicioglu, İ. (2005). Thomas modeli kapsaminda yoneticilerin catisma yonetim stilleri ve tekstil isletmelerinde bir alan arastirmasi [The conflict management styles of managers in the scope of the Thomas model and a case study]. *Ticaret ve Turizm Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi*, 1, 1–19.

Sahin, A. (2007). *İlkogretim okulu yoneticilerinin kisiler arası iletisim becerileri ve catısma yonetimi stratejileri arasındaki iliski [The relatıonship between interpersonal communication skills and conflict management strategies of primary school administrators].* (Unpublished master's thesis). Akdeniz Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu. Antalya.

Tabor, B. (2001). *Conflict management and interpersonal communication style of the elementary principal.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Missouri, Columbia.

Tallo, J. T. (2008). *Business organisation & Management*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Education.

Tanriverdi, M. (2008). *Ortaogretim yoneticilerinin ogretmenler tarafından algilanan catisma yonetim stilleri ile ogretmenlerin okul iklimi algiları arasındaki iliski [The relationship between conflict management styles of secondary school principals and school climate according to the teachers perceptions].* (Unpublished master's thesisi), Yeditepe Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu, İstanbul.

Tekkanat, D. (2009). *İlkogretim okulu yoneticilerinin catisma yonetiminde kullandiklari iletisim tarzlarina iliskin ogretmen algilari (Edirne ili ornegi). [Teacher perceptions about communication skills that is used by primary school managers for conflict management (Edirne Province Case)].* (Unpublished master's thesisi), Sakarya Universitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu, Sakarya.

Thomas, K. W. (1992). Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update. *Journal of organizational behavior*, *13*(3), 265-274.

Topluer, A. (2008). *İlkogretim okulu yoneticilerinin iletisim yeterlilikleri ile orgutsel catisma duzeyleri arasındaki iliski [The relationship between primary school administrators'communication skills and organizational conflict level].* (Unpublished master's thesisi), İnonu Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu, Malatya.

Tutar, H. & Yilmaz, K. M. (2010). *Genel iletisim kavramlar ve modeller [General communication concepts and models].* Ankara: Seckin Yayincilik.

Uzun, T. & Ayik, A. (2016). Okul mudurlerinin iletisim becerileri ile ogretmenlerin genel ve orgutsel sinizm tutumları arasındaki iliskilerin incelenmesi. [The relationship between school principals' communication skills and teachers' general and organizational cynicism attitudes]. *Mersin Universitesi Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi,* 12(2), 672-688.

Ustuner, M., & Kis, A. (2014). The relationship between communication competence and organizational conflict: A Study on head of educational supervisors. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research,* 56, 1-24.

Wall, J. A., & Callister, R. R. (1995). Conflict and its management. *Journal of management,* 21(3), 515-558.

Wee, L. E. (2011). *Principals' communication style and parents' involvement in school*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Southampton, Southampton.

Wood, T. J. (2011). *Communication in our lives.* Boston: Wadsworth.

Wood, T. J. (2012). *Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounters.* Boston: Wadsworth.

Okul Müdürlerinin İletişim Yeterlikleri İle Çatışma Yönetim Stilleri Arasındaki İlişki

Atıf:

Uzun, T. & Ayik, A. (2017). Relationship between communication competence and conflict management styles of school principals. *Euraisan Journal of Educational Research,* 68, 167-186, http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2017.68.9

Özet

Problem Durumu: Öğretmen algılarına göre, okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ile çatışma yönetim stilleri arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi hem okul müdürlerinin etkin yönetim sergilemesi, hem de olumlu bir okul iklimi açısından önemlidir. Okul ortamında çatışmaların olması kaçınılmaz görülmektedir. Okul ortamında çatışmaların yönetilmesi ve tüm paydaşlar arasında işbirliğinin sağlanması okul müdürlerinin görevleri arasında bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma tüm okul yöneticileri ve müdürlerine, çatışmaları yönetme ve çözme konusunda uygulamaya yönelik bazı bulgular sağlayabilir. Özellikle kişilerarası ilişkilerde iletişimin anahtar rolü ve anlaşmazlıkların çözümünde de çatışma yönetim stillerinin önemi düşünüldüğünde, araştırma sonuçlarının literatüre olumlu katkılar sunması beklenmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu araştırmada ilköğretim okullarında görev yapan öğretmenlerin algılarına göre, okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ve çatışma yönetme biçimleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda araştırmada şu sorulara cevap aranmıştır:

1. Öğretmen algılarına göre okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ne düzeydedir?
2. Öğretmen algılarına göre okul müdürlerinin çatışma yönetme stilleri nasıldır?
3. Okul müdürlerinin iletişim becerileri ile çatışma yönetme stilleri arasında anlamlı ilişkiler var mıdır?
4. Okul müdürlerinin iletişim becerileri çatışma yönetme stillerini anlamlı düzeyde yordamakta mıdır?

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırmanın modelini tarama modellerinden ilişkisel tarama modeli oluşturmaktadır. İlköğretim okulunda görev yapan 245 öğretmene verilerin toplanması için Wiemann (1977) tarafından geliştirilen "İletişim Yeterlikleri Ölçeği" ve Rahim (1973) tarafından geliştilen "Örgütsel Çatışma Ölçeği" uygulanmıştır. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeği, empati, sosyal rahatlık ve destekleme olmak üzere üç boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Ölçeğin güvenirliği empati boyutu için .95, sosyal rahatlık boyutu için .76, destekele boyutu için .79 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Örgütsel Çatışma Ölçeği; tümleştirme, ödün verme, hükmetme, kaçınma ve uzlaşma olmak üzere 5 alt boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Ölçeğin güvenirliği .91 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri, en yüksek destekleme boyutunda (M: 3.88), en düşük sosyal rahatlık boyutunda (M: 3.85)'dır. Okul müdürleri çatışma yönetim stillerinden, en yüksek tümleştirme (M: 3.79), en düşük hükmetme (M: 2.75) sitlini kullanmaktadır. Araştırmayaya göre; okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ve çatışma yönetme stilleri arasında anlamlı ilişkilerin olduğu görülmektedir. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin, anlama empati kurabilme, sosyal rahatlık ve destekleme boyutları ile çatışma yönetme stilleri ölçeğinin tümleştirme, ödün verme, kaçınma ve uzlaşma boyutları arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. r değerleri, .23 ile .81 arasında değişmektedir. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin anlama empati kurabilme ve destekleme boyutu ile çatışma yönetme stilleri ölçeğinin hükmetme boyutu arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. r değerleri, -.24 ile -.62 arasında değişmektedir. Araştırma bulguları, öğretmen algılarına göre, okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterliklerinin çatışma yönetim stillerini yordadığını göstermektedir. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin anlama empati kurabilme (β=.994, p<.01) boyutu araştırmaya katılanların çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin tümleştirme boyutuna yönelik algılarını pozitif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. Bunun yanında, sosyal rahatlık (β= -.144, p<.05) boyutu ise çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin tümleştirme boyutuna yönelik algıları negatif yönde ve anlamalı düzeyde yordadığı görülmektedir. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin destekleme (β=.019, p>.05) boyutu çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin tümleştirme boyutunun anlamlı yordayıcısı değildir. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin anlama empati kurabilme (β=1.372, p<.01) boyutu, araştırmaya katılanların çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin ödün verme boyutuna yönelik algılarını pozitif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. Bunun yanında, sosyal rahatlık (β=-.455, p<.01) ve destekleme (β=-.334, p<.01) boyutları ise çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin ödün verme boyutuna yönelik algıları negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin destekleme (β=-.784, p<.01) boyutu, araştırmaya katılanların çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin hükmetme boyutuna yönelik algılarını negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. Anlama empati kurabilme (β=.197, p>.05) ve sosyal rahatlık (β=.197, p>.05) boyutları çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin hükmetme boyutunun anlamlı yordayıcısı değildir. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin anlama empati kurabilme (β=1.029, p<.01) boyutu, çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin kaçınma boyutunu pozitif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordarken, sosyal rahatlık (β=-.378, p<.01) ve destekleme (β= -.265, p<.01) boyutları çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin kaçınma boyutunu negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. İletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin anlama empati kurabilme (β=1.196, p<.01) boyutu, çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin uzlaşma boyutunu pozitif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. Bunun yanında, sosyal rahatlık (β=-.403, p<.01) boyutu ise çatışma yönetim stilleri ölçeğinin uzlaşma boyutunu negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Araştırmanın önemli sonuçları şöyle özetlenebilir: 1) Öğretmenlerin algılarına göre, okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterliklerini en yüksek destekleme boyutunda en düşük sosyal rahatlık boyutunda kullandığı ortaya çıkmıştır. 2) Okul müdürlerinin çatışma yönetim stillerinden en çok bütünleştirme en az hükmetme stilini kullandıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. 3) Okul müdürlerinin iletişim

yeterlikleri ölçeğinin anlama empati boyutuyla; çatışma yönetim stillerinden tümleştirme, uzlaşma ve ödün verme stilleriyle pozitif yönde yüksek, kaçınma stiliyle pozitif yönde orta, hükmetme stiliyle negatif yönde düşük bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. 4) Okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin sosyal rahatlık boyutuyla; çatışma yönetim stillerinden tümleştirme stiliyle pozitif yönde yüksek, kaçınma uzlaşma ve ödün verme stilleriyle pozitif yönde orta, hükmetme stiliyle negatif yönde düşük bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. 5) Okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin destekleme boyutuyla; çatışma yönetim stillerinden tümleştirme, uzlaşma ve ödün verme stilleriyle pozitif yönde orta, kaçınma stiliyle pozitif yönde düşük, hükmetme stiliyle negatif yönde orta bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. 6) Okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin anlama empati boyutu; çatışma yönetim stillerinden tümleştirme, ödün verme, kaçınma, uzlaşma boyutlarını pozitif yönde anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. 7) Okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin sosyal rahatlık boyutu; çatışma yönetim stillerinden tümleştirme, ödün verme, kaçınma, uzlaşma boyutlarına yönelik algılarını negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır. 8) Okul müdürlerinin iletişim yeterlikleri ölçeğinin destekleme boyutu; çatışma yönetim stillerinden ödün verme, kaçınma, hükmetme boyutlarına yönelik algılarını negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde yordamaktadır.

Araştırma bulguları, öğretmen algılarına göre okul müdürlerinin kaçınma ve ödün verme stillerini orta düzeyde kullandıkları yönündedir. Çatışmaların çözümünde kaçınma ve ödün verme stili kullanıldığında, zaman içerisinde aynı problemler yeniden ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Bu anlamda okul müdürleri, kaçınma ve ödün verme stilini kullanırken mevcut sorunun ileriki dönemlerde potansiyel çatışmalara kaynaklık edebileceğini dikkate almalıdırlar. Bu açıdan okul müdürleri kaçınma ve ödün verme stillerini daha az kullanmalıdırlar.

Bulgular, okul müdürlerinin hükmetme stilini orta düzeyde kullandıklarını göstermektedir. Okul müdürü, hükmetme stilinde yasal gücünü kullanarak çatışmaya geçici çözümler getirmektedir. Bu durumda okul müdürleri öğretmenlerin bir dizi olumsuz tutum içinde çalışmak zorunda kalabileceklerini de dikkate almalıdırlar. Bu bağlamda okul müdürleri hükmetme stilini daha az kullanmalıdırlar.

Bulgular, uzlaşma stilini orta düzeyde düzeyde kullandıklarını göstermektedir. Bu stil, okulda çatışma yaşayan tarafların kabul edebileceği ortak bir çözüm yolu ile ilgilidir. Bu bağlamda okul müdürleri bu stili daha fazla kullanmalıdır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğretmen algıları, empati, destek, bütünleştirme, kaçınma, hükmetme.