

The Relationship between Communication Competence and Organizational Conflict: A Study on Heads of Educational Supervisors

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Since conflict is an organizational phenomenon, its comparison between other organizational variables to find possible associations has been an important research motive. Relevant researchers have found significant correlations between conflict handling strategies of principals of different genders and school culture, emotional intelligence and conflict management styles, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and conflict solution styles. Considering the rapid development of communication and the need for organizations to change, an increase in individual differences among organization members has become inevitable today. This also causes increased conflicts among organization members who are constantly interacting with each other. Poor communication underlies the interpersonal conflicts. The degree of interpersonal communication significantly determines the organizational performance and information transmission. Each educational organization, like other organizations, is composed of people with different personalities, perceptions, attitudes, value judgments, personal goals, and expectations. Individual differences can cause problems. The solutions to these problems seem to be closely associated with the communication competence of organization members.

Purpose of Study: This study investigates the relationship between communication competences and organizational conflict levels of heads of educational supervisors, and the extent to which communication competence predicts organizational conflict.

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Methods: This associational study was conducted on 217 educational supervisors working in head departments of educational supervisors in eight cities of Turkey. Data were collected using the "Communication Competences Scale" and "Organizational Conflict Scale."

Findings and Results: Results indicated that heads of educational supervisors *mostly* exhibit communication competences including the components of empathy, social relaxation and support behaviors. Educational supervisors also stated that they *sometimes* experience organizational conflict including the components of intergroup, between groups and personal conflict in their head departments. A negative moderate level of correlation was found between communication competence and organizational conflict levels of heads of educational supervisors. In addition, communication competence was found to predict organizational conflict significantly. Additionally, it was found that empathy competence, one of the communication competences, is a significant predictor of intergroup and personal conflict, and support competence is a significant predictor of within group conflict. It was also found that social relaxation competence as one of the components of communication competence is not a significant predictor of any of the components of organizational conflict.

Conclusions and Recommendations: This study provides new insight into the effects of communication competence on conflict management in educational organizations and is of value to educational leaders, managers, and other conflict management specialists.

Keywords: Educational supervisors, Communication competence, Organizational conflict.

Introduction

One way of authenticating the quality of the teachers and school programs is through the evaluation process. Thus, supervision's first priority is to oversee the efficiency and effectiveness of the school community. This process can sometimes be threatening, depersonalizing, and humiliating since it places individuals in superior versus inferior roles. When it comes to supervisory teams, for the head of the team and other members of the team, positional authority seems to be more important than an authority based on competence.

Bursahoğlu (1994, p. 129) defines inspection (evaluation) as a method of controlling behavior for the public good. He also sees inspection as one of the most frequently used regulatory mechanisms to ensure cohesiveness in the educational system. Inspection can also be defined as the process of monitoring whether organizational acts are in line with the goals, principles and rules agreed upon. The main goal of inspection is to detect to what extent the organizational goals have been

achieved, to take precautions for better outcomes and to improve the processes used (Aydın, 2000, p. 11).

One important unit of the Turkish Educational System, the Head Department of Educational Supervisors, has important roles in executing the inspectional duties as a part of the schools' administration process (Article I, Law No 5984, published in Official Gazette dated 13.06.2010 and numbered 27610). The duties of the educational supervisors were specified in Law No 5984 as follows:

Educational supervisors' and deputy inspectors' fields of assignment include the services of guiding, in-service training, supervision, inspection, assessment, examination, research and investigation of organized and extensive education institutions of all types and levels, except for the guidance and inspection of directorates of national education in provinces and districts and the secondary education institutions, and the analysis and investigation of teachers working in these institutions regarding their subject fields.

As legally specified, the heads of educational supervisors are assigned to inspect, assess, examine, and investigate the institutions and to guide and train the staff on service.

Highlighting different role classifications of educational inspectors based on variables in role construction, Başar (2000, p. 39) distinguishes the supervisors' roles as leadership, administration, guidance, help, training, research and investigation under three scopes: duty, process and behavior. Like other professionals, educational supervisors are expected to be competent in performing their roles.

Competency: To Phillips (1983), defining competency is like climbing an oily post and when you think you have finished, it slips out of your hands. Phillips (1983) defines competence as anything required by the job definition or communication goal however it is measured under certain circumstances. Competence is one's belief in accomplishing a job and is a must in motivating that person. Competence can be observed through behaviors and classified according to situational positions.

Spitzberg (1983) compares his views on competence with those of McCroskey. Spitzberg states that McCroskey distinguishes competence from skill, performance and productivity and it is held in three traditional behavioral domains: psychomotor, affective and cognitive. Spitzberg reports that McCroskey describes competence as knowledge. To Spitzberg (1983), the distinction between motivation, knowledge and competence is important, for "performance" can be enhanced or restricted by any or all of these. The independence of motivation, knowledge and competence has been highlighted in many researches. Competence is not naturally inherent in one's behaviors but can be a produced result of an event. In other words, one's competence should be handled in a certain context.

The term "competence" has different definitions which can be categorized as theoretical and operational. Theoretical definitions describe competence as the existence or absence of qualifications to perform a role considering it a potential,

whereas operational definitions refer to competence as the ability to perform a task at a certain place and a required time as the vivid indicator of that potential (Başar, 2000, p. 97-98).

Başar (2000) groups supervisor competences with regard to some fields including course inspection, institution inspection, research and investigation. Taymaz (1982, p. 4) stressed that inspectors' fields of competences can be categorized under six distinctions, including administration, leadership, guidance, teaching, research expertise, and investigation. One competence commonly required for all of the competences classified above seems to be communication competence.

Communication competence: To Rickheit, Strohner and Vorweg (2008, p.18), the term communication competence was used by Dell Hymes in 1969 to stress knowledge of grammar rules rather than spoken communication competence. They cite that Wiemann (1977) and Spitzberg ve Cupach (1984, 1989) contributed significantly to the expansion of the scope of communication competence. In Wiemann's (1977) study, it was emphasized that communication competence approaches can be handled under three groups: t-group, social skill, and self-expression. Wiemann (1977, p. 198) defines communication competence as "the ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he (she) may successfully accomplish his (her) own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his (her) fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation." Wiemann states that communication competence is a combination of five basic skills including affiliation/support, social relaxation, empathy, behavioral flexibility and interaction management. Rubin and Martin (1994) handle interpersonal communication competence under such categories as self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, interaction management, altercentrism, expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy and environmental control. Hoy and Miskel (2010, p. 347) consider communication competence as a set of skills and researches one interactant possesses. In this regard, people with communication competence are expected to be able to send messages, listen to feedback, and provide feedback well.

Blatt and Benz (1993) also found that support and empathy competences are related to students' respect for teacher, and other-focusedness is strongly associated with the items in the students' teacher evaluation scale. In addition to this, competences in social relaxation, interaction management, self-disclosure, and assertiveness dimensions were found to be slightly associated with the items in the students' teacher evaluation scale. It was also emphasized that empathy and supportiveness were basic components of communication competence.

Myers and Kassing (1998) reported that seniors' communication competences are a significant predictor of juniors' organization perception, and juniors with a high level of organizational identity perception judge their seniors as more competent in communication and more participative in interaction than the juniors with moderate and low levels of organizational identity perception. It was also reported that principals' communication competences are strongly correlated with effective

leadership skills (Sophie, 2004). Johns (1997) found that effective educational leadership is highly correlated with competences regarding starting communication, listening, sending and waiting for feedback, and public affairs. Şimşek (2003) reported a strong positive correlation between principals' communication competences and the sound culture of schools (Şimşek, 2003). Contrary to these findings, no correlation between inspectors' communication competences and effective inspection was reported (Craig, 2000).

Smith (2004), comparing the communication strategies of principals in high and low SES schools, found that principals working in schools in low SES milieu generally use their communication strategies to manipulate the school staff, whereas those in schools in upper SES milieu use their communication strategies for problem solving, critical thinking, enhancing and introducing the student personality and performance. No significant association was found between primary school principals' interpersonal communication competence, organizational conflict and school climate, but a significant correlation was found between primary school principals' interpersonal communication competence and interpersonal conflict (Tabor, 2001). A research on technical and office staff working in the field of communication technologies revealed that workers with high performance are more motivated compared with low performing workers to adapt to communication and have more empathic communication competence (Payne, 2005).

Organizational conflict: Organizational conflict is defined in different ways. Conflict is mainly caused by parties' perception of conflict, opposition, contrast, prevention and presence of two or more groups with seemingly non-compatible goals and interests (Aydın, 2000, p. 292). Conflict is an attempt of one party to neutralize the efforts of another (Robbins, 1994, p. 220). Organizational conflict is the state of interaction between workers and clusters with irreconcilable differences or non-compatible characters. The conflict behavior of interacting people is a reaction to events and contradictions affecting their cognitive and affective strengths (Başaran, 2004, p. 323). However the conflict is defined, it is composed of certain elements such as disagreement, opposition and disharmony. Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in social lives where people interact (Bursalıoğlu, 2002; Karip, 2003; Şimşek, Akgemci, Çelik, 2001). An organization without any conflict is dead. In living and functioning organizations, the presence of conflict is inevitable and natural (Açıklalın, 1998, p. 107).

Types of Organizational Conflict: To Rahim (2000, p. 20), types of conflicts can be classified according to sources of conflict and the organizational levels in which they arise. Types of conflicts according to sources of conflict are emotional conflict, task conflict, conflict of interest, value conflict, goal conflict, realistic and unrealistic conflict, institutionalized and non-institutionalized conflict, punitive conflict, causeless conflict and misattributed conflict, and displaced conflict. Conflicts classified according to organizational levels in which they arise are intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflicts (Rahim, 2001, p.33).

Intrapersonal conflict: Intrapersonal conflict is tension experienced within the individual due to actual or perceived pressures from incompatible goals or expectations (Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborb & Uhl-Bien, 2010, 233). Intrapersonal conflicts emerge when organization members are asked to perform tasks incompatible with their expertise, experience, interests, goals and values (Rahim, 2001, p.23). It is the kind of conflict people experience when they face two controversial situations—either negative or positive—and cannot decide between the two (Kirel, 1996, p. 212). When someone undertakes conflicting and opposing roles and is obliged to choose between these roles, intrapersonal conflict can occur (Karip, 2003, p.24).

Interpersonal conflict: Interpersonal conflict occurs between hierarchical levels, units or organization members with similar ranks (Rahim, 2001, p. 23). It is the kind of conflict between two or more people. These conflicts emerge when there are differences between goals, attitudes, values and behaviors (Kirel, 1996, p. 212, Başaran 2004, p. 327). Interpersonal conflict occurs between two or more individuals who are in opposition with one another. It may be substantive, emotional, or both. Interpersonal conflict often arises in the performance evaluation process (Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborb & Uhl-Bien, 2010, p. 233). The conflicts caused by personal incompatibility or disagreement among command-staff managers with senior-junior conflicts can be said to be common types of interpersonal conflicts in organizations. In addition, lack of harmony among workers and differences in the views, ideas and interests among managers-chiefs-officers can be examples of interpersonal conflicts (Eren, 2000, p.535).

Intragroup conflict: This kind of conflict occurs when group members or subgroup members experience conflict initiating situations such as disagreements in goals, tasks or procedures. Moreover, intragroup conflicts can emerge as a result of disagreements and tensions between group members and group leaders (Rahim, 2001, p. 23-24).

Intergroup conflict: Intergroup conflict occurs between teams, perhaps those competing for scarce resources or rewards, and perhaps those whose members have emotional problems with one another. Intergroup conflict is quite common in organizations, and can make the coordination and integration of task activities very difficult (Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborb & Uhl-Bien, 2010, 233). This type of conflict is also known as interdepartmental conflict and resembles the conflicts between departments or groups in an organization (Rahim, 2001, p. 24). Conflicts between elementary teachers and subject teachers are examples of intergroup conflicts (Karip, 2003, p. 25). Intergroup conflicts can be distinguished as vertical conflict, horizontal conflict, staff-manager conflict and conflicts based on differences (Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman, 1995, p. 439).

Since conflict is an organizational phenomenon, its comparison among other organizational variables to find possible associations has been an important research motive (Gümüşeli, 1994; Özmen, 1997; Polat, 2004; Türnüklü, 2002; Yıldırım, 2003). Relevant researchers have found significant correlations among conflict handling

strategies of principals of different genders and school culture (Blackburn, 2002), emotional intelligence and conflict management styles (Atay, 2002; Lee, 2003), teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and conflict solution styles (Roberts, 1997).

Considering the rapid development of communication and the need for organizations to change, an increase in individual differences among organization members has become inevitable today. This also causes increased conflicts among organization members who are constantly interacting with each other (Karip, 2003, 1). Poor communication underlies these interpersonal conflicts. The degree of interpersonal communication significantly determines the organizational performance and information transmission (Robbins, 1994, p. 141). As cited in Payne (2005), communication competence and skills in an organization are associated with such organizational outputs as vertical mobility, administrative performance, leadership skills, worker commitment, job performance, and senior acceptance. Each educational organization, like other organizations, is composed of people with different personalities, perceptions, attitudes, value judgments, personal goals, and expectations. Individual differences can cause problems. Solutions to the problems seem to be closely associated with the communication competence that organization members have.

In the Turkish educational system, supervisory tasks are carried out through counselling and the supervisory department of national ministry. This department has a head of educational supervisory which consists of head supervisors, supervisors and vice-supervisors. According to the ministry regulations, the heads are chosen and assigned among supervisors. Also, there are a lot of tasks that a head faces in their daily routine which necessitate communication competencies. When administration, organization and supervision tasks are taken into account, it is mandatory that a head has healthy communication skills. Communication competence is also used by the head in mentoring and guiding the supervisors to prepare for the profession. Presiding in meetings, organizing and coordinating commissions and delegating tasks are all daily routine tasks a head encounters often, which all demand competency in communication. So far, there has been no research for this group in the literature. This research is the first to supply invaluable data for the heads of educational supervisors.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational conflict levels and communication competence of the heads of educational supervisors according to the views of educational supervisors working under head supervisors. Accordingly, the following questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the communication competence ("empathy", "social relaxation" and "support") level of heads of educational supervisors according to the views of educational supervisors?
2. What is the level of organizational conflict ("intragroup conflict," "intergroup conflict" and "personal conflict") in the department where educational supervisors work?

3. Does the communication competence level of heads of educational supervisors significantly predict the level of organizational conflict?
4. Do the components of communication competence (empathy, social relaxation and support) among heads of educational supervisors significantly predict intragroup conflict, intergroup conflict, and personal and total conflict levels in their organization?

The study facilitates understanding of how to unbundle the linkage between communication competence and conflict management in educational supervisory departments, along with making contributions to conflict theory. It also provides new insight into the effects of communication competence on conflict management in educational organizations and is of value to organizational leaders, managers, and other conflict management specialists.

Method

This is a relational descriptive survey conducted on educational supervisors working in head departments of educational supervisors in eight cities of Turkey. In correlational research, researchers attempt to determine whether a relationship exists between two (or more) quantitative variables (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Linear regression analysis and comparisons of correlations were utilized to examine relationships between communication competence and conflict management.

Research group

One of the non-random sampling methods, purposive sampling, was chosen since on occasion, based on previous knowledge of a population and the specific purpose of the research, researchers use their personal judgment when they need to select a sample (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

A total of 446 educational supervisors working in head departments of educational supervisors in the following Turkish cities, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Hatay, Kayseri, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Tokat and Şanlıurfa Provincial Directorates of National Education were sent the instrument during the 2010–2011 school year. However, only 217 educational supervisors (14 women and 203 men) responded to the instrument, which were evaluated in this study. Among these participating educational supervisors, 171 had undergraduate and 46 had postgraduate degrees. The distribution of participating educational supervisors according to provinces and response rates is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Participating Educational Supervisors According to Provinces and Response Rates

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Total number of Educational supervisors</i>	<i>Number of participating Educational supervisors</i>	<i>Response rate</i>
Adiyaman	43	28	65%
Diyarbakır	48	22	46%
Hatay	57	37	65%
Kayseri	58	22	38%
Malatya	55	33	60%
Kahramanmaraş	60	27	45%
Tokat	35	24	69%
Şanlıurfa	90	24	27%
Total	446	217	49%

Research Instruments and Procedures

In order to collect data about communication competence levels of heads of educational supervisors and levels of organizational conflict based on educational supervisors' views, I used the Turkish adaptations (Topluer, 2008) of "*Communication Competence Scale-CCS*" originally developed by Wiemann (1977) and "*Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory; ROCI-I*" originally developed by Rahim (1983).

Communication Competence Scale-CCS: The 5-point (Always-Never) Likert type scale with 36 items was adapted into Turkish by Topluer (2008) using data obtained from 255 teachers working in Malatya, Elazığ and Adiyaman city centers. The exploratory factor analysis revealed a three-factor structure where items 6, 30, 8, 10 and 20 were discarded due to low factor loadings. The factors were named "**empathy**" (17 items), "**social relaxation**" (7 items) and "**support**" (7 items). Items 4, 8, 9 and 24 in the **support** factor need to be reverse coded. The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) estimated for each factor of CCS and for the overall scale were high ($\alpha=.96$ for empathy, $\alpha=.87$ for social relaxation, $\alpha=.86$ for support factor, and $\alpha=.96$ for overall scale (Topluer, 2008). For the present study, the internal consistency coefficients were estimated $\alpha=.97$ for empathy, $\alpha=.90$ for social relaxation, $\alpha=.74$ for support factor, and $\alpha=.97$ for overall CCS. In the interpretation of the scale points, minimum and maximum points are taken into account. For instance, from the 17-item empathy factor, there can be produced a minimum of 17 points and a maximum of 85 points (17x5). To interpret this range, the following intervals are used: 0-17 never, 18-34 rarely, 35-51 sometimes, 52-68 generally and 69-85 always.

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-I): ROCI-I developed by Rahim (1983) is composed of 24 items under three factors (personal conflict, intragroup conflict and intergroup conflict). It is a five-point Likert-type instrument.

To test the construct validity of ROCI-I, factor analysis was done using data obtained from 255 teachers. As a result of the analysis, the 22nd item was discarded

because of low factor loading. The resulting scale contained nine items in the **intragroup conflict** factor, eight items in the **intergroup conflict** factor, and six items in the intrapersonal conflict factor. The items 2, 3, 7, 9, 14, 15 and 20 *intergroup conflict* factor and items 4, 8, 12, 16, and 22 (*original item no 23*) in *intrapersonal conflict* factor are reversed items. The increase in the scores from ROCI-I in general and factors indicates increased organizational conflict. The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were found to be .85 for *intrapersonal conflict* factor, .85 for intragroup conflict, and .55 for intergroup conflict. The internal consistency coefficient was estimated .81 for the entire inventory (Topluer, 2008). For the present study, the internal consistency coefficients were estimated $\alpha=.78$ for personal conflict, $\alpha=.86$ for intragroup conflict, $\alpha=.70$ for intergroup conflict, and $\alpha=.84$ for overall ROCI-I.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive techniques and linear regression analysis. To this end, multiple and simple linear regression analyses were used to test if scores from the overall communication competence scale and its factors (independent-predicting variable) significantly predict the scores from overall organizational conflict scale and its factors (dependent-predicted variable) (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu ve Büyüköztürk, 2010).

Results

The findings on the communication competence (empathy," "social relaxation" and "support") levels of heads of educational supervisors according to the views of educational supervisors are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Heads of Educational Supervisors' Level of Communication Competence

<i>Communication competence</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Empathy</i>	217	68,12	13,49	22,00	85,00
<i>Social relaxation</i>	217	26,80	5,78	7,00	35,00
<i>Support</i>	217	27,88	4,68	13,00	35,00
Total	217	122,81	22,46	50,00	155,00

The analysis revealed that, according to the views of educational supervisors, the empathy competence mean score of the heads of educational supervisors was $M=68.12$, the social relaxation score was $M=26.80$, and the support competence mean score was $M=27.88$. This finding suggests that, based on educational supervisors'

views, the heads of educational supervisors “generally” display the behaviors regarding empathy, social relaxation and support competences as the components of communication competence. The overall score for the communication competence of heads of educational supervisors according to the educational supervisors was $M=122.81$, which also indicates that the heads of educational supervisors “generally” display the behaviors requiring communication competence.

The findings on the level of organizational conflict (“intragroup conflict,” “intergroup conflict” and “personal conflict”) in the departments where educational supervisors work are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The Level of Organizational Conflict in Head Departments of Educational Supervisors

<i>Organizational conflict</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Intragroup conflict</i>	217	19,02	6,17	9,00	45,00
<i>Intergroup conflict</i>	217	19,05	4,94	8,00	40,00
<i>Intrapersonal conflict</i>	217	13,29	4,32	6,00	30,00
Total	217	51,38	11,75	22,00	93,00

The analysis revealed that according to the views of educational supervisors, the level of organizational conflict in head departments of educational supervisors was $M=19,02$ for Intragroup conflict factor, $M=19,05$ for Intergroup conflict factor, $M=13,29$ for Intrapersonal conflict factor, and $M=51,38$ for the overall scale. This suggests educational supervisors perceive that organizational conflicts in general and intragroup conflicts, intergroup conflicts, and intrapersonal conflicts in particular are experienced “sometimes” or moderately in head departments of educational supervisors. This moderate level of conflict can be considered positive, since excessive organizational conflicts in an organization can cause deviation from goals, poor productivity, hindrance, hostility, lack of objectivity, distortion, prejudices, and aggressiveness. On the other hand, too little organizational conflict causes inertia, disharmony, reluctance, laziness, ignorance, indifference, and extravagancy (Başaran, 2004, p. 329-330).

The findings about whether communication competence levels of heads of educational supervisors significantly predicted level of organizational conflict were presented in Table 4-8.

Table 4

Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results about Whether Communication Competence Significantly Predict Organizational Conflict

Variable	B	Standard error B	β	t	p	Zero r	Partial r
Constant	91,143	3,500		26,044	,000*		
Communication competence	-.324	,028	-.619	-11.549	,000*	-,619	-,619

R = .619 ; R² = .383
F=133.383; p = .000

*p< .05

The regression analysis revealed that communication competence is a significant predictor of organizational conflict (F=133.383; p=.000). The correlation between communication competence and organizational conflict was found to be negative and moderate (r=-.619). Communication competence explains about 38 % of the variance in organizational conflict (R²=.383). Thus, it can be said that as the heads of education supervisors' communication competence increases, the organizational conflict decreases significantly.

Table 5

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results about Whether Empathy, Social Relaxation and Support Competences Significantly Predict Intergroup Conflict

Variable	B	Standard error B	β	t	p	Zero r	Partial r
Constant	32,911	1,701	-	19,346	,000*	-	-
Empathy	-,187	,061	-,509	-3,072	,002*	-,206	-,171
Social relaxation	-,093	,126	-,109	-,743	,458	-,051	-,041
Support	,049	,085	,046	,574	,567	,039	,032

R = ,580 ; R² = ,337
F=36,029; p = .000

*p< .05

The regression analysis revealed that three types of communication competences together are significantly and moderately correlated with *intergroup conflict* (R=.580; p=.000). They together explain about 34 % of the variance in intergroup conflict

($R^2=.337$). Yet, t analysis about the significance of regression coefficients indicates that only *empathy competence* is a significant predictor of the *intergroup conflict* scores. The partial correlation between empathy competence and intergroup conflict was found to be negative and low ($r= -.171$).

Table 6

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results about Whether Empathy, Social Relaxation and Support Competences Significantly Predict Intragroup Conflict

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard error B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Zero r</i>	<i>Partial r</i>
Constant	36,160	2,294	-	15,765	,000*	-	-
Empathy	,029	,082	,062	,349	,728	,024	,021
Social relaxation	,001	,169	,001	,003	,997	,000	,000
Support	-,685	,114	-,520	-5,983	,000*	-,379	-,360

R = ,477 ; $R^2 = ,228$
F = 20,915; p = .000

*p< .05

The regression analysis revealed that three types of communication competences together are significantly and moderately correlated with *intragroup conflict* ($R=.477$; $p=.000$). Together, they explain about 23 % of the variance in intergroup conflict ($R^2=.228$). Yet, t analysis about the significance of regression coefficients indicates that only *support competence* is a significant predictor of the *intragroup conflict* scores. The partial correlation between support competence and intragroup conflict was found to be negative and moderate ($r=-.360$).

Table 7

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results about Whether Empathy, Social Relaxation and Support Competences Significantly Predict Intrapersonal Conflict

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard error B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Zero r</i>	<i>Partial r</i>
Constant	24,063	1,516	-	15,874	000*		
Empathy	-,114	,054	-,356	-2,106	,036*	-,143	-,120
Social relaxation	-,207	,112	-,277	-1,849	,066	-,126	-,105
Support	,091	,076	,099	1,206	,229	,082	,069

R = ,558 ; $R^2 = ,312$
F = 32,136; p = .000

*p< .05

The regression analysis revealed that three types of communication competences together are significantly and moderately correlated with *interpersonal conflict* ($R=.558$; $p=.000$). Together, they explain about 31 % of the variance in intergroup conflict ($R^2=.312$). Yet, *t* analysis about the significance of regression coefficients indicates that only *empathy competence* is a significant predictor of the *intrapersonal conflict* scores. The partial correlation between support competence and interpersonal conflict was found to be negative and low ($r=-.120$).

Discussion and Conclusions

One of the critical components of our education system is the head departments of educational supervisors which are responsible for providing feedback about the proper operation of the system and executing guidance, in-service training, supervision, inspection, assessment, research and investigation services. Head departments of educational supervisors work in every province under the affiliation of national education directorates. These units are composed of heads of educational supervisors, their deputies, educational supervisors and other officers. This study, which intended to investigate the association between the communication competences of heads of these departments and the level of organizational conflict therein, revealed that heads of educational supervisors “generally” display empathy, social relaxation and support competences, which are the components of communication competence. This finding supports the conclusions of Mulla (2008) that supervisors perceive themselves to have a higher competency level and the conclusions of John (1997) that school principals perceive themselves confident in the performance of all communication skills. Also, fewer cultural differences among supervisory teams may have contributed to this result (Smeir, 2012). A study on special education directors produced similar findings. They perceived themselves as using more compromise, solution-orientation styles and control styles (Biediger-Collins, 2000). One reason for this conclusion may be that supervisors’ roles were moving from authoritative to democratic (Fehr, 2001). On the other hand, the level of intragroup conflict, intergroup conflict, intrapersonal conflict, and total organizational conflict in head departments of educational supervisors were found to occur “sometimes.” As previous research findings indicate, the communication competence of the leader and its effect on communication effectiveness as evidenced by member perception of leader-member agreement, appears to be a necessary precondition for a high quality leader-member exchange relationship. (Flauto, 1999; Kinnick, 2005; Myers & Kassing, 1998; Payne, 2005).

The analysis regarding the association between communication competence and organizational conflict revealed that communication competence is a significant predictor of organizational conflict, where the former explains about 38% of the variance in the latter ($R=.619$, $R^2=.383$, $p<.01$). Based on the moderate negative correlation found between communication competence and organizational conflict ($r=-.619$), it was concluded that as the communication competences of heads of educational supervisors improve, the organizational conflicts in head departments of

supervisors also decrease. This finding is supported by previous researches on teachers (Şahin, 2010) athletes (Haselwood et al., 2005) and business students (Gross & Guerrero, 2000).

Among the three types of communication competences, only *empathy competence* was found to be a significant predictor of the *intergroup conflict*, with a negative low correlation (partial $r=-.171$). Thus, heads of educational supervisors are recommended to display empathic behaviors when it is needed to decrease the level of intergroup conflict in the head department.

Among the three types of communication competences, only *support competence* was found to be a significant predictor of the *intergroup conflict*, with a negative moderate correlation (partial $r=-.360$). Thus, heads of educational supervisors are recommended to display empathic behaviors when needed to decrease the level of intergroup conflict in the head department. Therefore, it can be concluded that as the heads of educational supervisors display supportive behaviors in communication such as listening attentively, not interrupting, considering others' feelings, and caring about what is said, the level of intragroup conflict will decrease.

Among the three types of communication competences, only *empathy competence* was found to be a significant predictor of the *interpersonal conflict*, with a negative low correlation (partial $r=-.120$). Thus, heads of educational supervisors are recommended to display empathic behaviors when needed to decrease the level of interpersonal conflicts in the head department.

In sum, the current study adds new understanding to the supervision process, particularly for the heads of supervisory teams. It builds on the existing literature in the fields of communication and conflict resolution. Additionally, the study only provided the perspective of supervisors. In order to arrive at a fuller understanding of communication competencies and conflict concepts, additional research needs to be done from the perspective of head supervisors, supervisors and vice-supervisors specifically in job satisfaction, motivation, professional commitment and self-efficacy.

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İletişim Yeterliği ile Örgütsel Çatışma Arasındaki İlişki: Eğitim Denetmenleri Başkanlığı Üzerine Bir Araştırma

Atıf:

- Üstüner, M., Kış, A. (2014). The relationship between communication competence and organizational conflict: A study on heads of educational supervisors. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 56, 23-44, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2014.56.5>

Özet

Problem Durumu: Denetimi, eğitimde gözetme yollarından biri olarak gören Bursalıoğlu (1994, s:129) kamu yararı adına davranışı kontrol yöntemi olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra denetimi uyumu sağlamanın bir gereği olarak düzenleyici mekanizmalardan en çok kullanılanı olarak da nitelendirmektedir. Denetim, örgütsel eylemlerin kabul edilen amaçlar doğrultusunda, saptanan ilke ve kurallara uygun olup olmadığının anlaşılması süreci olarak da tanımlanmaktadır. Denetimin temel amacı örgütün amaçlarının gerçekleştirilme derecesini saptamak, daha iyi sonuç alabilmek için gerekli önlemleri almak ve süreci geliştirmektir (Aydın, 2000, 11).

Eğitim denetçilerinin rolleri konusunda, rol oluşumundaki değişkenlerden kaynaklanan farklı rol sınıflandırmaları üzerinde duran Başar (2000, 39) denetçi rollerini görev, süreç ve davranış boyutlarını kapsayacak biçimde liderlik, yöneticilik, rehberlik ve yardım, eğiticilik, araştırma ve soruşturma rolleri olarak belirtmektedir. Diğer iş görenler gibi eğitim denetçilerinin de rollerinin gereklerini yerine getirebilmeleri için bazı yeterliklere sahip olmaları gerektiği üzerinde durulmaktadır.

İletişim Yeterliği: Rickheit, Strohner ve Vorweg'e (2008, 18) göre iletişim yeterliği kavramı 1960'lı yıllarda Dell Hymes tarafından, iletişimde konuşma dili

yeterliğinden ziyade gramer kuralları bilgisini vurgulamak için kullanılmıştır. Onlara göre, Wiemann (1977), Spitzberg ve Cupach (1984/1989) iletişim yeterliği kavramının kapsamının geliştirilmesinde önemli katkılarda bulunmuşlardır. Wiemann (1977) tarafından yapılan çalışmada iletişim yeterliği yaklaşımlarının t-grup, sosyal beceri, ve kendini ifade etme yaklaşımları olarak üç grupta ele alınabileceği vurgulanmaktadır. Wiemann (1977) iletişim yeterliğini “ iletişimde olan bir bireyin iletişimin amaçlarına ulaşma doğrultusunda durumun özelliklerini de dikkate alarak uygun davranışı seçme becerisi” olarak tanımladıktan sonra, iletişim yeterliğinin yakın ilişki (affiliation/support), sosyal rahatlık (social relaxation), empati (empathy), davranışsal esneklik (behavioral flexibility) ve etkileşim yönetimi (interaction management) olmak üzere beş temel alana ilişkin becerilerin bileşiminden meydana geldiğini belirtmiştir. Rubin ve Martin(1994), kişilerarası iletişim yeterliğini kendini açma(self-disclosure), empati (empathy), sosyal rahatlık(social relaxation), girişkenlik(assertiveness), etkileşim yönetimi(interaction management), diğeri-odaklılık (altercentrism), dışa vurumculuk (expressiveness), destekleyicilik (supportiveness), samimiyet(immediacy) ve çevresel kontrol(environmental control) boyutlarında ele almışlardır. Hoy ve Miskel (2010, 347) iletişim yeterliğini iletişim kuran kişinin sahip olduğu bir takım beceri ve kaynaklar olarak ele almaktadırlar. Bu kapsamda iletişim yeterliğine sahip bireylerin gönderme, dinleme ve geribildirim becerilerine sahip olması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadırlar.

Örgütsel Çatışma: Örgütsel çatışmanın tanımı farklı şekillerde yapılmıştır. Çatışmanın temelinde tarafların çatışmayı algılaması, muhalefet, zıtlık, engelleme ve çıkarlarıyla amaçları uyumsuz görünen iki ya da daha fazla tarafın bulunması gereklidir (Aydın, 2000, 292). Çatışma, taraflardan birinin diğerinin çabalarını etkisizleştirmek için yaptığı bir girişimdir (Robbins, 1994, 220). Örgütsel çatışma, bağdaştırılmaz ayrılıkları ya da uzlaşmaz özellikleri olan iş görenler ve kümeler arasındaki etkileşim durumudur. Bir birleriyle etkileşen kişilerin çatışma davranışı, bilişsel ve duygusal güçlerini etkileyen olaylara ve çelişkilere karşı yaptıkları bir tepkidir (Başaran, 2004, 323). Çatışmanın tanımı ne şekilde yapılırsa yapılsın anlaşmazlık, zıtlık, uyumsuzluk ve birbirine ters düşme çatışmanın temel unsurlarıdır. İnsanın etkileşim halinde olduğu toplumsal yaşamda çatışma kaçınılmaz bir olgudur (Bursalıoğlu, 2002, 155; Karip, 2003, 1; Şimşek, Akgemci, Çelik, 2001, 238). Çatışmanın olmadığı bir örgüt ölüdür. Yaşayan, etkililiği devam eden örgütlerde çatışmaların varlığı kaçınılmazdır ve doğaldır (Açıkalın, 1998, 107).

İletişimin hızla geliştiği ve değişimin örgütler için zorunlu olduğu günümüzde örgüt üyeleri arasındaki bireysel farklılıkların artması kaçınılmaz olmuştur. Bu durum sürekli etkileşim halinde bulunan örgüt üyeleri arasında çatışmaların artmasına neden olmaktadır (Karip, 2003, 1). İnsanlar arasında ortaya çıkan çatışmaların temelinde zayıf iletişim yatmaktadır. Bireyler arasında var olan iletişimin derecesi örgütün performansını ve bilgilerin aktarılmasını önemli ölçüde etkiler (Robbins, 1994, 141).

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu araştırmanın amacı eğitim müfettişlerinin görüşlerine göre, eğitim müfettişleri başkanlarının iletişim yeterliği ile örgütsel çatışma arasındaki ilişki düzeyini belirlemektir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Çalışma Grubu: Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2009-2010 öğretim yılında, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Hatay, Kayseri, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Tokat ve Şanlıurfa Millî Eğitim Müdürlükleri, Eğitim Müfettişleri Başkanlıklarında görevli 217 eğitim müfettişi oluşturmaktadır. Bu illerde görev yapan toplam 446 eğitim müfettişinin tamamına ölçme araçları ulaştırılmasına rağmen 217 eğitim müfettişi araştırmaya katılmıştır.

Veri Toplama Araçları: Eğitim müfettişlerinin görüşlerine göre eğitim müfettişleri başkanlarının iletişim yeterliği ile örgütsel çatışma arasındaki ilişki düzeyini belirlemeyi amaçlayan bu araştırmada, Wiemann (1977) tarafından geliştirilen "iletişim yeterliği ölçeği-İYÖ" (*Communicative Competence Scale*) ve Rahim tarafından geliştirilen "örgütsel çatışma ölçeği-ÖÇÖ" (*Rahim Organization Conflict Inventory; ROCI-I*) ölçeklerinin Topluer(2008) tarafından yapılan Türkçe uyarlamaları kullanılmıştır.

Verilerin Çözümlemesi: Araştırmada elde edilen verilerin analiz edilmesinde betimsel istatistikler ve doğrusal regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Ortalama puanların değerlendirilmesinde her bir ölçeğin alt ölçeklerinden alınan ortalama puanlar hesaplanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Eğitim müfettişleri başkanlıkları her ilde millî eğitim müdürlüğü bünyesinde, eğitim müfettişi başkanı, başkan yardımcıları, eğitim müfettişleri ve ilgili diğer memurlardan oluşan bir birim olarak belirlenen amaçlar doğrultusunda işleyişte bulunmaktadır. Bu birimlerin başkanlarının iletişim yeterlikleriyle birimlerde ki örgütsel çatışma arasındaki ilişkinin araştırıldığı bu araştırma sonucunda, eğitim müfettişi başkanlarının, iletişim yeterliğinin bileşenlerinden olan empati, sosyal rahatlık ve desteklemeye ilişkin davranışları "çoğu zaman" göstermekte oldukları gözlenmiştir. Bu bulgu Mulla (2008) tarafından da desteklenmektedir. Bununla birlikte eğitim müfettişleri başkanlıklarındaki grup içi çatışma, gruplar arası çatışma, kişisel çatışma ve toplam örgütsel çatışma miktarının da "bazen" düzeyinde olduğu gözlenmiştir. Önceki araştırma bulguları da bir liderin iletişim yeterliğinin kaliteli bir lider-üye ilişkisi için önşart olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. (Flauto, 1999; Kinnick, 2005; Myers and Kassing, 1998; Payne, 2005).

İletişim yeterliğinin örgütsel çatışmayı yordama düzeyine ilişkin olarak yapılan analiz sonucunda, iletişim yeterliği ile örgütsel çatışma arasında kısmi korelasyonun negatif yönlü ve orta düzeyde ($r=-.619$) olduğu görülmüştür. İletişim yeterliği değişkeni, örgütsel çatışma puanı ile orta düzeyde ve anlamlı bir ilişki göstermektedir ($R= .619$, $R^2 = .383$, $p< .01$). İletişim yeterliği değişkeni örgütsel çatışmadaki toplam varyansın yaklaşık % 39'nu ($R^2 = .383$) açıklamaktadır. Bu bulguya göre, örgütsel çatışma üzerinde iletişim yeterliği manidar ve ters yönlü bir etki değişkenidir. Bu bulgu öğretmenler (Şahin, 2010) sporcular (Haselwood et al., 2005) ve işletme öğrencileri (Gross and Guerrero, 2000) üzerine yapılan araştırma bulgularıyla da desteklenmektedir.

İletişim yeterliği bileşenlerinden olan empati ile gruplar arası çatışma arasında negatif yönlü ve düşük düzeyde ($r=-.206$), sosyal rahatlık ile gruplar arası çatışma arasında negatif yönlü ve düşük düzeyde ($r=-.051$), destekleme ile gruplar arası

çatışma arasında pozitif yönlü ve düşük düzeyde ($r=.039$) bir ilişkinin olduğu gözlenmiştir. Empati, sosyal rahatlık ve destekleme değişkenleri, gruplar arası çatışma puanı ile orta düzeyde ve anlamlı bir ilişki göstermekte ($R=.580$) ve gruplar arası çatışmanın yaklaşık %34'nü açıklamaktadır. Empatinin gruplar arası çatışma üzerinde önemli (manidar) bir yordayıcı ve ters yönlü bir etki değişkeni olduğu gözlenmiştir. Eğitim müfettişleri başkanlarının insanları konuşmaya teşvik etmesi, onları girişimlerinde desteklemesi, onları anlamaları ve bunu hissettirmeleri, samimi, sakin ve dikkatli bir dinleyici olmaları, iyi geçinmesi ve uyumlu olması gibi davranışlarının gruplar arası çatışma miktarı ile negatif yönlü bir ilişki gösterdiği görülmektedir. Gruplar arası çatışma miktarının azaltılması gerektiği bir durumda eğitim müfettişleri başkanlarının empatik davranışlar sergilemeye özen göstermeleri önerilebilir.

İletişim yeterliği bileşenlerinden olan empati ile grup içi çatışma arasında pozitif yönlü ve düşük ($r=-.024$), sosyal rahatlık ile grup içi çatışma arasında sıfır düzeyinde ($r=.000$), destekleme ile grup içi çatışma arasında negatif yönlü ve orta düzeyde ($r=-.379$) bir ilişkinin olduğu gözlenmiştir. Empati, sosyal rahatlık ve destekleme değişkenleri, grup içi çatışma puanı ile orta düzeyde ve anlamlı bir ilişki göstermekte ($R=.477$) ve gruplar arası çatışmanın yaklaşık %23'nü açıklamaktadır. Desteklemenin gruplar içi çatışma üzerinde önemli (manidar) bir yordayıcı olduğu görülmüştür. Buna göre gruplar içi çatışma üzerinde destekleme yeterliğinin manidar ve ters yönlü bir etki değişkeni olduğu görülmüştür. Eğitim müfettişleri başkanlarının iletişimde destekleyici davranışlar sergilemeleri, örneğin, iyi bir dinleyici olması, söz kesmemesi, duyguları dikkate alması, söylenenlere önem vermesi ve ilgilenmesi gibi davranışlarla grup içi çatışma miktarı negatif yönlü bir ilişki göstermektedir. Eğitim müfettişleri başkanlarının grup içi çatışma miktarını azaltmada bu tür davranışlara özen göstermeleri önerilebilir.

Empati ile kişisel çatışma arasında negatif yönlü ve düşük düzeyde bir ilişkinin ($r=-.143$), sosyal rahatlık ile kişisel çatışma arasında negatif yönlü ve düşük düzeyde bir ilişkinin ($r=-.126$), destekleme ile kişisel çatışma arasında pozitif yönlü ve düşük düzeyde bir ilişkinin ($r=.082$) olduğu görülmüştür. Empati, sosyal rahatlık ve destekleme değişkenleri, kişisel çatışma puanı ile orta düzeyde ($R=.558$) ve anlamlı bir ilişki göstermektedir. Empatinin kişisel çatışma üzerinde önemli (manidar) bir yordayıcı olduğu görülmüştür. Buna göre kişisel çatışma üzerinde empati yeterliğinin manidar ve ters yönlü bir etki değişkeni olduğu görülmektedir. Kişisel çatışma miktarının azaltılması gerektiği bir durumda eğitim müfettişleri başkanlarının empatik davranışlar sergilemeye özen göstermeleri önerilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Eğitim denetmeni, İletişim yeterliği, Örgütsel çatışma.*