# Relationship Between Teachers' Workplace Friendship Perceptions and Conflict Management Styles

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## Abstract

It can be put forward that workplace friendship has impact on some organizational variables such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction and intentions to leave the job (Morrison, 2005, pp. 152-153). The preferences of the employees can also be influenced by their perceptions about workplace friendship. In this study, it was aimed to find out the predictive levels of employees' workplace perceptions for their preferences about the conflict management styles. The research was designed as a descriptive survey model. The scales of "workplace friendship" and "Rahim Organizational Conflict Management" were utilized as data collection tools. The correlations among and predictive levels of sub-dimensions of workplace friendship scale for the conflict management styles were analyzed by means of multiple regression analysis. At the end of the analyses, it was found out that the variable of friendship prevalence is a meaningful predictor of conflict management style of integrating, friendship opportunity is a meaningful predictor of compromising style, and friendship prevalence and friendship opportunity variables together are the meaningful predictors of avoiding style.

**Keywords:** workplace friendship, conflict management, conflict management styles

## 1. Introduction

Administration is to use the material sources of the organization systematically in accordance with the compromised targets of the organization (Amadi-Eric, 2008, p. 5). Administration constitutes the cornerstone of the organizational functioning. Educational organizations are also the organizations where administrational processes come forth. At schools, there are a lot of factors which affect the management processes. In this context, conflict management styles are one of the factors which influence the management procedures most. The awareness of the managers about the conflict management styles of the employees can be guiding elements for managers during the management processes.

The conflict management styles of teachers can be shaped by different factors. One of these factors can be the perceptions of teachers about workplace friendship. There are two main features of workplace friendship. The first of them is the fact that they are relations set up on voluntary bases and the second one is that they are set up personal relations rather than the internals roles of the organization (Rawlins, 1992; Wright; 1978, Sias, 2006; as cited in Sias, Pedersen, Gallagher, & Kopaneva, 2012, p. 255). It can be asserted that the perceptions of the employees about the workplace friendship are one of the fundamental factors which affect the behavior styles of the employees during conflicts. In this context, the relationship between the perception of teachers about workplace friendship and their conflict management styles will be scrutinized in terms of the variables of gender, seniority and the school where they work.

### 1.1 Conflict Management

Conflict is defined as disagreement among areas of interest and ideas (Esquivel & Kleiner, 1997; as cited in Henry, 2009, p. 16). The organizations are formed of employees with different backgrounds, experiences, knowledge and values and these differences play an important role in the interaction among the members (Năstase, 2007, p. 80). Conflict arises in the perceptions of the employees about the differences which occur among the areas of interest. Thus, when employees with different values come together to realize some goals, conflicts may arise (Rahim, 2001, p. 1). In this point of view, conflict is an indispensible part of life (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014, p. 119).

Employees cannot be expected to compromise for each topic during their lifetimes.

It can be put forward that the compulsory interaction of the employees leads to the occurrence of the conflicts in the organizational dimension. Corwin (1969; as cited in Chaudhry & Asif, 2005, p. 238) defines conflict as the tension which arise among the employees and the groups and the situation which damages the cooperation in an organization. Can (2005, p. 377) defines conflict as the failure in the decision making mechanism of the organization due to the disagreement among employees during decision making processes out of different alternatives. Conflict in organizations can be varied based on the differences in the structure and the functioning of the organizations. As a result, the factors which lead to conflicts in organizations will be summarized under a new title.

### 1.1.1 The Factors Which Lead to Conflicts

Organizational conflicts can arise from different factors but it can be asserted that all conflicts occur due to the factors which have the possibility to generate conflict (Pondy, 1967, p. 299). Conflicts can come into being in different phases of management processes and sometimes of the tools which are used to reach the goals (Chaudhry & Asif, 2005, p. 238). In this context, it can be put forward that organizational conflict is quite a complicated phenomenon and it can turn up as the interaction of the different factors. Yıldızoğlu (2013, pp. 11-18) categorized the factors which lead to conflict under four main groups: (1) Individual factors, (2) organizational factors, (3) factors related with the work and (4) communication problems. It can be adduced that conflicts in organizations are shaped by these four factors.

The individual factors constitute the fact that employees have different values and they have different perceptions about the organizational goals (Brooklyn, 1975, p. 13). It can be asserted that values are components which shape the decisions and behaviors of the employees. The personality traits of the employees are another individual feature which leads to conflicts. If the employees have distinct goals, dexterities and attitudes, this may result in conflicts (Koçel, 2005, p. 671). Personality plays a crucial role for the occurrence of conflicts. Moreover, the perceptions and interpretations of the employees about the events may bring about conflicts (Genç, 2004, p. 254). The vales, personality traits and backgrounds of employees se them to interpret the similar or same situations and conditions in different ways.

The implementations about the functioning and the structure of the organizations are two of the most significant reasons of organizational conflict. Organizational components such as organizational justice, rewarding system, workplace security, motivation tools and supervision styles might call forth conflicts in organizations (İsa, 2015, pp. 54-55). The perceptions of employees about organizational justice and vaguely set standards for rewarding and motivation can pave the way to conflicts. The size and differences in management styles of the organizations can also be regarded as elements leading to conflicts. The new behavior styles, areas of specialization, role statutes which come into being as the organizations get bigger might also cause conflicts (Ertürk, 2000, p. 228). The management styles of the administrators such as democratic or authoritarian may also be important reasons for conflict. Especially the management styles which are not embraced by the employees can induce conflict. In the globalizing world, especially the international organizations have employees with different cultural backgrounds. This might enable the organizations to adapt to flexible market conditions but in turn it can lead to conflicts. Multiculturalism may be encouraged in the organizations when conflicts are handled effectively and this might have a positive effect on organizational performance (Holt & DeVore, 2005, p. 2). The cultural differences of the employees can be used by the managers as the sources of productivity.

New areas of specialization in organizations can result in conflicts in organizations. The differentiation and specialization in organizations increase as the organizations get larger. Conflicts might arise among the roles determined by the bureaucracy and the areas of specialization (Ertekin, 1993, p. 72). The obscurity about entitlement can also be regarded as another important impulsive force for conflicts. Entitlement means the determination of the general functioning and the principles, standardizing the duties and responsibilities, setting up clearly who, where, how and by which authorization and responsibility a duty will be carried out. In this respect, in institutions which have completed their institutionalization, job descriptions and analyses were definitely established (Karavardar, 2011, p. 162). This will eliminate obscurity about authority and decrease the conflict which will arise due to this obscurity.

The features of the work itself are another element leading to conflict. Some duties in the organization necessitate the cooperation of the employees from different departments. This situation which entails the cooperation of the employees is called the interrelatedness of the duties. If one of the departments does not carry out its duty effectively, the other department may also face problems fulfilling its duties. This interrelatedness among the departments can cause conflicts among the departments (Ertürk, 2000, p. 225). The limited sources and the

injustice in the distribution of these sources can also be regarded as the reasons for conflict. The sharing of the sources among the departments of an organization might bring about conflict (Şimşek & Kıngır, 2009, p. 52). The fair distribution of the sources in accordance with the needs of the departments might hinder conflicts in organizations.

It can be put forward that the problems encountered in communication problems are one of the fundamental reasons of conflicts in organizations. The factors such as the delays in the transfer of the message among the individuals and groups, the fact that the messages are not transferred accurately, the misunderstanding of the message, the obscurity of the message, the differences in the perception of the message can bring about conflicts in different levels of the organizations (Aydın, 1994, pp. 305-306; Koçel, 1993, p. 401; as cited in Sarpkaya, 2002, pp. 417-418). The components such as the presence of the effective communication channels in an organization, the administrators' styles of communication with the subordinates and the communication skills of the employees also play an important in the occurrence of conflicts in organizations.

As a result, there can be a lot of elements which lead to conflicts in organizations. However, it can be asserted that the conflicts might arise from the styles of managements in organizations. It can also be put forward that the conflicts can be eliminated without damaging the organizational functioning if they are handled effectively, and even the conflicts can enrich the administration processes by enabling different opinions for the problems and different perceptions for the same problems. In this context, the conflict styles of teachers can play an important role for the conflicts to have positive effects on the schools. Therefore, the conflict management styles will be studied under the next title.

### 1.1.2 Conflict Management Styles

The individuals demonstrate different behavior styles during conflict processes. These behavior styles determine conflict management styles of the individuals. The conflict management styles are categorized under two main dimensions: (1) Interest in oneself and (2) interest in others (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979; Rahim, 1983; as cited in Tunç & Kutanis, 2013, p. 24). These two dimensions which determine the style of behaviors of the individuals constitute the basis for five different conflict management styles: (1) Accommodating, (2) compromising, (3) competing, (4) avoiding and (5) collaborating (Rahim et al., 2002, pp. 7-8). These five styles determine the styles of behaviors during conflict processes.

Accommodating means enabling the two sides to be aware of the differences, finding a solution to the problem by setting up an environment where opinions are shared freely (Abas, 2010, p. 27). In the broadest terms, accommodation means establishing superior values during conflict processes and ensuring the sides to gain common benefits out of these values. As the needs of the both sides are met, accommodation style is regarded to be an effective way of solving conflicts (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; as cited in Rognes & Schei, 2007, pp. 3-4). This drives the attention to the fact that meeting the needs of the both sides is very important during conflict management.

In collaborating style, the common features, benefits and expectations are taken into consideration. Although the differences among the sides are admitted, they are regarded to be inferior in terms of significance. In this style, the interests of the individuals are for the others, not for themselves. The common features are brought in the foreground while the differences are kept background and the needs of the opposite side are tried to be met (Yıldızoğlu & Burgaz, 2014, p. 297). Collaborating is regarded to be as s style in which a common point is tried to be found out without taking the differences into account.

In competing or dominating style, the individual is interested in himself rather than the other side (Rahim & Magner, 1995; as cited in Chan, Huang, & Ng, 2007, p. 4). This style requires forcing the other side for making concessions by using the status quo or other kinds of powers and because of this, it is called forcing style (Kaimenyi, 2014, p. 57). It can be asserted that forcing style is not an effective style as it takes the interests of only one side into consideration. It is impossible to eliminate the conflict as a whole by applying this style.

Avoiding is derived from the presupposition that conflict cannot be solved via any method as discussion or any other. The situations which disturb the both sides of conflict are ignored (Howell, 2014, p. 16). In this style, both sides of the conflict keep away from the environment of conflict with the hope of the conflict might decrease gradually. The weak side of the style is the fact that it does not focus on the solution of the problem (Huan & Yazdanifard, 2012, p. 146). It can be put forward that in avoiding style, the sides of the conflict try to keep away from the context of the conflict and wait for the conflict to disappear after a while.

Compromising style means the moderate interest of the individual for himself and the other side during conflict. It is a style which aims at finding a middle course for the conflict. It requires the both sides to make concessions of their wishes so as to find a middle course. This means that the needs of the both sides cannot be met completely

during conflict (Vokić & Sontor, 2009, p. 7). In this style, the condition of both winning and losing is at stake. The individuals change their ideas during conflict either because they find a rational reason or because they want to cease the conflict (Huan & Yazdanifard, 2012, p. 146). The middle course style can be regarded as a temporary solution as it does not meet the needs of the sides of conflict though it might end the conflict and it can cause the sides to be more insistent about their wishes if the style is applied frequently (Huan & Yazdanifard, 2012, p. 146). Although this style of conflict management does not eliminate conflict totally, it may delay the conflict as far as the sides are voluntary to make concessions about their wishes.

To sum up, individuals demonstrate different approaches about their behaviors during conflicts. These approaches are reflected as different behavior on processes. The approaches which the individuals adopt can come into being as the combination of different factors. The perceptions of the employees about workplace friendship can be one of those factors. In this study, the relationship between the conflict management styles of employees and their perceptions about workplace friendship will be scrutinized. In this context, theoretical knowledge about the workplace friendship will be provided under the following title.

*1.2 Workplace Friendship*

"Nobody would want to live if they did not have friends" (Aristo, as cited in Morrison, 2005, p. 1). This quotation displays how friendship is important for one to feel good and happy. Our friends who have same interests as us and who share the same values with us are components which enrich our lives (Veniegas & Peplau, 1997; as cited in Morrison, 2005, p. 1). Workplace friendship defines the voluntary relations set up at the workplace based on trust, loyalty, affection, common interests and values. As the employees spend most of their time at the workplace, it is natural for them to set up friendships at their institutions (Berman et al., 2002, p. 218; as cited in Lee & Ok, 2011, p. 2). Friendship relations are natural parts of real life. Employees establish friendships at the workplace for different reasons. Dotan (2009, p. 2) lists these reasons as follows: Job security, logical assumptions, common interests and values, affinity and benefit. The reasons for setting up friendships at school can be affected by the different features of the individual and institution.

Different opinions were put forward about the effect of workplace friendship on the organizational functioning. For example Morrison and Nolan (2007; as cited in Khaleel, Chelliah, Khalid, Jamil, & Manzoor, 2016, pp. 1-2) asserted that workplace friendship has a negative effect on organizational functioning and it complicates the administration processes. There are also studies which show the positive effects of workplace friendship on organizational functioning as sharing of information (Kram & Isabella, 1985), increase in job satisfaction (Winstead et al., 1995) and job performance (Ross, 1997) and positive influence on organizational commitment (Nielsen et al., 2000; as cited in Asgharian, Yusoff, Yaser-Mazhari, Mardani, & Hazrat-Soltan, 2013, p. 18). Workplace friendship can influence the organizational functioning in various ways. Workplace friendship both affects the organizational functioning and it is also affected by it and the relations among the individuals. In this context, it can be asserted that there can be a lot of factors which affect the perceptions of employees about workplace friendship. One of these factors is the conflict management styles individuals. In this context, a relationship between the conflict management styles and perceptions of the employees about the workplace friendship is to be searched for. Moreover, whether the perceptions of teachers about workplace friendship can be a predictor of their conflict management styles will be scrutinized.

Workplace friendship can have a positive impact on solving the organizational conflicts in a more constructive manner. Conflicts are a good source of productivity when they are solved efficiently as they can constitute the base for gathering different perspectives to an organizational problem. In schools where social interaction gains more importance, the conflict management styles of teachers can have a more significant impact on solving the conflicts in a more effective and efficient way as the presentation of different suggestions can be crucial to find solutions to instructional and educational problems. In this context, it is important to find out the factors which lead the teachers to adopt more constructive styles of conflict management at schools. In this context, workplace friendship can be regarded to be an important factor affecting the conflict management styles of teachers. The goal of the research is to discover if there are any significant relationships between the teachers' perceptions about the workplace friendship and their conflict management styles. In this context, whether the perceptions of teachers about workplace friendship can be the predictor of their conflict management styles will be searched for. The main problem statement of the search is:

- Is there any significant relationship between teachers' perceptions about workplace friendship and their preferences about conflict management styles?

Around this main problem statement, the answers to the following questions will be searched for:

- How do the perceptions of teachers affect their preferences about conflict management styles?

- Is it possible to increase the effectiveness of conflict management procedures at school by improving teachers' perceptions about workplace friendship?

## 2. The Method

### 2.1 The Model of the Research

In this research, the aim of which is to determine whether there is a relationship between the perceptions of primary, secondary and high school teachers about workplace friendship and their conflict management styles, a descriptive qualitative method in which the opinions, skills and attitudes of the participants in relation to a specific topic is searched for (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2008, p. 226).

### 2.2 The Population and Sampling

The teachers who have been at office in state schools in Kastamonu province of Turkey in 2017-2018 instructional year constitute the population of the research. According to the information gained from Kastamonu National Education Directorate, there are 441 teachers at primary schools, 590 teachers at secondary schools and 654 teachers at high schools. Thus the population consists of 1685 teachers. It was assumed that 283 teachers could represent the population of 1685 teachers (Anderson, 1990, p. 202; as cited in. Balcı, 2015, p. 108).

### 2.3 Data Collection Tools

Two different data collecting tools were used for the research. To determine the conflict management styles of the teachers, the Rahim Organizational Conflict Scale which was developed by Rahim (1983) was utilized. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish was carried out by Gümüşeli (1994, pp. 304-305). The scale is composed of three forms (Rahim, 1983; as cited in Yıldızoğlu, 2013, p. 108). In this research, the form C of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Scale which is also called ROCI II and which is used to determine the conflict management styles applied for the conflict with the peers was used. The scale is formed of 28 items and five dimensions. The dimensions are composed of the following items: integrating dimension 1, 5, 12, 22, 23 and 28, obliging dimension 2, 11, 13, 19 and 24, dominating dimension 8, 9, 18, 21 and 25, avoiding dimension 3, 6, 16, 17, 26 and 27 and compromising dimension 4, 7, 10, 14, 15, 20 (Gümüşeli, 1994, pp. 161-162). In the scale, there are items which ask for how the employees behave in conditions of conflict with their colleagues at the workplace. The Cronbach Alpha values of each dimension are: Integrating, .77, obliging .72, dominating .72, avoiding .75 and compromising .72 (Rahim, 1983, p. 373). The scale is in the form of five scale Likert type. The teachers put forward their ideas as (1) never, (2) scarcely, (3) sometimes, (4) frequently and (5) always.

For the measurement of the perceptions of the teachers about workplace friendship, workplace friendship scale which was developed by Nielsen, Jex and Adams (2000, pp. 634-638) and which was adapted to Turkish by Emrah Kıral (2016) was utilized. In the scale, there are 10 items which asks for the opinions of teachers about workplace friendship. The scale constitutes of two dimensions. One is friendship opportunity and the other is the friendship prevalence. The scale was initially designed to have 12 items but as the results of the factor analysis, the fifth and the tenth items were excluded from the scale. Thus, there are five items in both of the dimensions. The friendship opportunity is composed of the items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 and the friendship prevalence dimension is composed of the items 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12. The friendship opportunity dimension aims at finding out if the friendship relationships are supported in the organization and the friendship prevalence dimension aims at discovering if there is an effective environment for friendship in the organization (Yavuzkurt, 2017, p. 17).

The scale is in the form of five scale Likert type and teachers assert their ideas as (1) I totally disagree, (2) I disagree, (3) I am uncertain, (4) I agree and (5) I totally agree. The higher values obtained from the scale indicates a higher perception for friendship in the organization and the lower values is the vice versa (Lin, 2010, p. 59). The validity and reliability tests of both scales have been carried out. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale out of the whole scale has been measured as .83, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the friendship opportunity dimension as .76 and the the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the friendship prevalence as .78 (Yavuzkurt, 2017, p. 18). Field (2012, p. 675) puts forward the value over .70 for Cronbach Alpha coefficient is enough for the reliability of a scale. In the light of the findings, it can be put forward that the scale is reliable and valid.

### 2.4 Data Collection

Data was collected through visiting the schools. The data collecting tools were handed in to a teacher or an administrator at the schools. Those teachers and administrators requested the teachers to fill in the questionnaires. About one week later, the schools were visited again and the scales were collected. The number of schools visited is 22. During visits, 700 surveys were given to the schools and only 305 of them were turned back and 23 of the surveys were not included in the research as they were not filled in properly. In the research, 282 data collecting tools were studied. The statistics about the participants are as follows: 145 of the participants are males and 137 are

females, 82 of the participant work at primary schools, 90 of the work at secondary schools and 110 at high schools. In terms of seniority, there are 43 teachers between 1-10 years, 141 teachers between 11-20 years, 78 teachers between 21-30 years and 20 teachers between 31-40 years.

*2.5 Data Analysis*

For the analysis of the research, SPPS 20.0 program was used and significance levels of the measurements were tested at α.05 confidence level. The values of the Rahim conflict management scale form C were determined as "1-1.79 I totally disagree'", "1.80-2.59 I disagree", "2.60-3.39 I am uncertain", "3.40-4.19 I agree" and "4.20-5.00 I totally agree". The same values were used for the workplace friendship scale. Thus, the values were regarded as "1-1.79 I totally disagree'", "1.80-2.59 I disagree", "2.60-3.39 I am uncertain", "3.40-4.19 I agree" and "4.20-5.00 I totally agree".

The data was scanned before analysis. Firstly, missing data has been searched for. No missing data more than 5% in any of the data sets has been detected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989, p. 105). In missing data analysis, it has been found out that p= .894 and p>.05. These findings mean that the missing data is random and average value can be attributed to the missing values. The missing value results are between %0.0 and %0.7. According to Çokluk and Kayrı (2011, p. 291), attributing average points is an effective way for missing values. As the result of the analysis, missing values in 18 different data sets have been found out and they were completed by assigning average points. In this process, the technique of series means which takes the means of all participants into account was utilized (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2018, p. 21). Before the analysis, the 12th item of the friendship perception scale which has a negative meaning was reverse coded.

To determine the outliers, Mahalanobis distance was utilized. To decide whether to apply parametric or nonparametric tests, the normality of the distribution of the values and homogeneity of the variances were tested. To test the normality of the distribution, skewness and curtosis values were scrutinized, histograms were checked and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. Levene Test was applied to determine the homogeneity of the variances. In regression analysis, which has been carried out to determine the relation between the perceptions of teachers about workplace friendship and their conflict management styles, scattering plots were analyzed to determine the linearity of the relation. To determine whether the friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence dimensions of the workplace friendship scale are the predictors of the integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising dimensions of the Rahim organizational conflict scale, the multiple linear regression analysis was used.

## 3. Results

First of all, before the analysis, the problem of multicollinearity was checked among the predictors through Pearson correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient values for the predictors were given in Table 1.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients of the predictor variables

|  | Integrating | Obliging | Dominating | Avoiding | Compromising |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Integrating | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Obliging | .-.007 | 1 |  |  |  |
| Dominating | -.017 | -.006 | 1 |  |  |
| Avoiding | .221 | .112 | .014 | 1 |  |
| Compromising | .086 | .078 | -044 | .081 | 1 |

Multicollinearity occurs when the predictor values are highly correlated with each other and it causes each variable to be an insignificant variable when all the other predictor variables are in the model (Agresti, 2007, p. 138). Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2014, p. 196) put forward that multicollinearity occurs when the correlation among any of the predictor variables is .90 or higher. When Table 1 is checked, it is seen that the highest correlation is between integrating and avoiding variables, r=.221, p≤.05. In the light of the correlation coefficients, it can be asserted that there is no multicollinearity among the predictors. In addition to the correlation coefficients, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were scrutinized. According to Çokluk et al (2018, p. 35) when there is no correlation among the predictors, the VIF value is as $R^2$=0, VIF=1, [VIF=1/(1-R2)=1/(1-0)=1]. For multicollinearity problem, VIF values should be 10 or over (Hair et al., 2014, p. 200). The highest VIF value among the predictor variables was calculated between avoiding and obliging variables. In addition, all tolerance values are below .10 and this indicates no multicollinearity among the predictors (Hair et al., 2014, p. 200). These findings show that there is no multicollinearity among the predictors.

In the research, to find out any significant relationship among the friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence variables and the five different dimensions of conflict management styles, multiple linear regression analysis was applied. The research was aimed at discovering if the two dimensions of the workplace friendship scale, friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence, are the significant predictors of the teachers' conflict management styles. The relationship was analyzed separately for each of the two dimensions of workplace friendship scale and the five different dimensions of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Scale. The results of the regression analysis to find out if the friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence are the meaningful predictors of the integrating variable of were given in Table 2.

Table 2. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis among the variables of friendship opportunity, friendship prevalence and integrating style

| Variable | B | Standard Error$_B$ | $\beta$ | t | p | Zero Order r | Partial r |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | -.123 | .499 | | -.247 | .805 | | |
| Friend. Opp. | -.024 | .073 | -.016 | -.326 | .744 | .017 | -.020 |
| Friend. Prev. | .963 | .088 | .550 | 10.968 | .000 | .549 | .549 |
| R=.549 | | $R^2$=.301 | | | | | |
| $F_{(2-279)}$=60.206 | | p=.000 | | | | | |

In the light of the findings, it can be asserted that the correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable is significant, $p \leq .05$. When the zero order correlations are scrutinized, the correlation between integrating and friendship opportunity was found out to be r=.549. The correlation between friendship prevalence and integrating style is r=-.017. Determination coefficient is $R^2$=.301. That means about %30 of the variance in integrating variable can be explained by the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. According to t test results related with the significance levels of regression coefficients, friendship prevalence is a significant predictor of integrating variable, $p \leq .05$, while friendship opportunity is not, $p \geq .05$. The results show that the suitable environment for friendship at schools has a positive impact on improving teachers' integrating style of conflict management.

The results of the regression analysis for the relationship between the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence and the variable of obliging has been given in the Table 3.

Table 3. The results of the regression analysis for the relationship between the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence and the variable of obliging

| Variable | B | Standard Error$_B$ | $\beta$ | t | p | Zero Order r | Partial r |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 3.875 | .405 | | 9.579 | .000 | | |
| Friend. Opp. | .103 | .059 | .103 | 1.732 | .084 | .102 | .103 |
| Friend. Prev. | -.020 | .071 | -016 | -.276 | .782 | -0.10 | -016 |
| R=.104 | | $R^2$=.011 | | | | | |
| $F_{(2-279)}$=1.515 | | p=.222 | | | | | |

The results show that the predictor variables "friendship opportunity" and "friendship prevalence" are not significant predictors of the variable "obliging", p=.222, $p \geq .05$. The results can also be interpreted as the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables is statistically insignificant.

Table 4. The results of the regression analysis for the relationship between the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence and the variable of dominating

| Variable | B | Standard Error$_B$ | $\beta$ | t | p | Zero Order r | Partial r |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | .449 | 1.112 | | .404 | .687 | | |
| Friend. Opp. | .228 | .196 | .079 | 1.327 | .185 | .083 | .079 |
| Friend. Prev. | .216 | .163 | .069 | 1.165 | .245 | .074 | .070 |
| R=.108 | | R$^2$=.012 | | | | | |
| F$_{(2-279)}$=1.659 | | p=.192 | | | | | |

According to the results, no significant relationship has been found out between the two dimensions of the workplace friendship and the dominating dimension of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Scale, p=.202, p≥.05. The variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence are not significant predictors of dominating style of conflict management. As the next step, the relationship between the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence and the variable of avoiding was searched for. The results have been given in Table 5.

Table 5. The results of the regression analysis for the relationship between the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence and the variable of avoiding

| Variable | B | Standard Error$_B$ | $\beta$ | t | p | Zero Order r | Partial r |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 2.779 | .243 | | 11.425 | .000 | | |
| Friend. Opp. | .077 | .036 | .114 | 2.156 | .032 | .141 | .128 |
| Friend. Prev. | .369 | .043 | .454 | 8.604 | .000 | .461 | .458 |
| R=.475 | | R$^2$=.226 | | | | | |
| F$_{(2-279)}$=40.617 | | p=.000 | | | | | |

The results show that there is significant relationship between friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence and avoiding, p=.00, p≤.05. When zero order and partial correlations between the variables are scrutinized, it is observed that there is a medium positive linear relationship between friendship prevalence and the avoiding, r=461. It can be asserted that when the perception of teachers about the friendship prevalence in the schools rises, they tend to demonstrate avoiding style in case of conflicts with their colleagues. When the variable of friendship opportunity is controlled, the correlation between friendship prevalence and avoiding style has been measured to be of medium strength, r=.458. The correlation between friendship opportunity and avoiding style is low, r=.141. When the friendship prevalence is controlled, the correlation between friendship prevalence and avoiding is still low, r=128.

When the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence are taken together, they have a medium correlation with the avoiding style of conflict, R=.475, R$^2$=.226, p≤.05. This shows that about %23 of the total variance in the avoiding variable can be explained by the variables of friendship prevalence and friendship opportunity. When the beta coefficient is analyzed, it can be put forward that one unit of increase in the variable of friendship prevalence causes an increase of .369 in the variable of avoiding style. According to the standardized beta coefficients (β), friendship prevalence is a more significant variable for avoiding style than the friendship opportunity. This shows that the environment for friendship has a positive impact on avoiding style of conflict. When t test results are analyzed, it can be put forward that both friendship prevalence and friendship opportunity are significant variables for avoiding style, p≤.05. Thus the following equation can be formed for the analysis:

*AVOIDING STYLE=43.246+0.380 FRIENDSHIP PREVALENCE+0.082 FRIENDSHIP OPPORTUNITY*

As the last step of the analysis, the regression analysis has been carried out between the dependent variable compromising style and the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. The results of the analysis have been given in Table 6.

Table 6. The results of the regression analysis for the relationship between the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence and the variable of compromising

| Variable | B | Standard Error$_B$ | $\beta$ | t | p | Zero Order r | Partial r |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 2.376 | .280 | | 8.498 | .000 | | |
| Friend. Opp. | .015 | .049 | .015 | 11.876 | .766 | .581 | .579 |
| Friend. Prev. | .486 | .041 | .580 | .298 | .000 | .050 | .018 |
| R=.581 | | R$^2$=.337 | | | | | |
| F$_{(2-279)}$=71.049 | | p=.000 | | | | | |

When Table 6 is scrutinized, it can be asserted that the relationship between the dependent variable compromising and the independent variables friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence is significant, p=.000, p≤.05. The correlation between friendship opportunity and compromising is a medium strength positive linear correlation, r=.581. Partial correlation between friendship opportunity and compromising is medium too, r=.580. It can be asserted that when friendship relationships are supported in the organization, it encourages the teachers to apply to compromising style in cases of conflicts at schools. However, the correlation between friendship prevalence and compromising style has been measured to be low, r=.039. In the same way, the partial correlation between the two variables is low, r=.017.

When the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence are included in the analysis, it can be asserted that there is a medium relationship between them and the dependent variable compromising, R=.581, R$^2$=.337, p≤.05. It can be put forward that about %34 of the variance in the variable of compromising can be explained by the variables of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. Beta coefficients show that one unit of increase in the variable of friendship opportunity causes an increase of .487 in the compromising variable. When standardized beta coefficients are scrutinized, it is observed that friendship opportunity is a more significant variable when compared to the variable of friendship prevalence. When t test results are examined, it can be put forward that friendship opportunity is a significant predictor of compromising variable, p≤.05. Meanwhile, friendship prevalence alone is not a significant predictor of the compromising variable, p≥.05. This shows that the friendship environment is not a significant variable in terms of compromising style in cases of conflicts among teachers at schools.

## 4. Discussion

Conflicts when managed effectively can be the mediators of effectiveness and productivity in organizations by adding to the organizational situations leading to the organizational effectiveness and performance. For example, Ongori (2009, p. 22) found out that organizational conflicts can add to the innovativeness of the organizations and they also can increase the quality of the decision making processes. Similarly David (2018, pp. 11-12) found out that collaborating and compromising styles of conflict management in micro finance firms can have positive impacts on organizational effectiveness. In the similar way, in their research, Hossain, Uddin, Hasan, and Hasan (2018, p. 64) have reached the conclusion that conflicts to a certain level have some positive impacts on the organization and the employee performance. Solving conflicts in a constructive manner might also play an important role for the educational institutions where positive perceptions of the shareholders constitute an important part for achieving the desired results. Gündüz, Tunç, and İnandı (2013, p. 656) put forward that if conflicts at schools are solved through the styles of integrating and compromising, this can have positive effects on educational processes. It can be asserted that for the conflicts to bear positive results for the schools depend to a great extent on the conflict management styles of the teachers. In the light of these researches, it can be put forward that conflicts when managed effectively can bear positive results in organizations and that during handling conflicts, some factors should be taken into consideration for conflicts to bear positive results. On the basis of this lies the importance of taking the opinions and interests of the both sides of the conflicts. The results of this study might shed light on the procedures for the administrators to handle the conflicts which are inevitable in all organizations effectively. In this respect, trying to improve the perceptions of teachers about the workplace friendship can have a positive impact on the conflict management styles of teachers. Many ways to improve the perceptions of teachers about their workplaces can be listed but the most important ones are listed here as suggestions for the school administrators:

- The social and cultural activities held at the school can be good mediators to improve workplace perceptions of teachers positively.

- During decision making processes, the decisions which the teachers take by way of compromising should be

taken into consideration.

- In all the activities carried out at school, the collaboration and cooperation of teachers should be encouraged.

- The special days should be celebrated by the attendance of all teachers at the school.

- To improve unity among teachers, the cooperative activities of teachers to deal with the private problems of teachers should be supported by the administration.

- The administration should not behave like a referee in cases of conflicts among teachers, rather they should try to create environments where teachers could assert their ideas freely and where both sides could reach an agreement on their own.

- Instead of trying to deal with the cases of conflicts, the administration should focus on the factors leading to conflicts.

- The tools for effective communication should be developed at schools and both the vertical and horizontal communication channels should be kept open.

- To establish a democratic environment at schools, the administration should enable all teachers to put forward their ideas freely.

To sum up, the perceptions of teachers about workplace friendship is a significant predictor of their conflict management styles. That is improving teachers' perceptions about their workplace friendship can have a positive impact on them to consult to more constructive styles in cases of conflict management. To encourage friendship at schools, the administration can implement many activities and it is on the hands of the administrators to create friendly environments at schools. Conflicts are indispensible parts of all organizations including educational ones and today they are regarded to be effective tools for organizations to reach the targets. This study shows that workplace friendship perception can play an important role for the conflict management styles. Thus, as an important forerunner of conflict management styles, improving the friendship environments of schools should be one of the crucial priorities of the school administrators.

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