The correlation between school administrators' solution-focused approach and conflict management strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine whether there was a correlation between school administrators' solution-focused approach and their preferences for conflict management strategies. The research design of this study was the correlational survey, which is one of the quantitative research designs. The sample of this study included 248 school administrators, non-parametric tests and correlation analysis were used to analyze the data together with descriptive statistics. The results showed that there was a significant difference among groups of school administrators in terms of the variable of gender, age and seniority. The data relating to the solution-focused approach and conflict management strategies were analyzed and presented separately in detail. In terms of examining the correlations between solution-focused approach and conflict management strategies preferred by school administrators, Spearman's correlation analysis was conducted and the results showed that there were both positive and negative relationships among those variables.

Keywords: Solution-focused approach, conflict, conflict management strategies, school administrators.

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INTRODUCTION

Post-modern theories, which have been influential in management science in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, have begun to focus on the psychological needs of employees by emphasizing the human dimension of the organization. Thanks to this changing perspective, managers are expected to be aware of the differences between employees and their strategies, skills and approaches on how to manage the conflicts that these differences may cause. It is known that managers who do not attach importance to the individual differences of their employees cause a decrease in the efficiency of the organization, problems in communication between employees and managers, unfair recruitment and promotions, and as a result, the emergence of experiences that will lead to intra-organizational conflicts (Hubbard, 2004).

Conflict could be defined as the process that results in tension between members of a group due to existing or perceived differences (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003).

Similarly, Robbins (1978) defined conflict as a disagreement between two or more parties for various reasons. It is known that there are various reasons for the emergence of conflicts. Moore (1996) grouped the causes of conflict into 5 different groups. These reasons were conflicts of values based on reasons such as different ideologies or religious beliefs, relationship conflicts based on inadequate communication, conflicts based on the misinterpretation of data due to disagreements on some issues, conflicts of interest based on competition for psychological needs, and conflicts structured on the unjust distribution of the organization's resources or unjust power.

It is possible to say that conflicts occur in all organizations, albeit in different dimensions. Educational organizations, of which source and output are human, are among the organizations where conflicts were experienced (Nural et al., 2012). Nikolaou (2018) stated that conflicts in educational organizations may arise due

to factors related to both the organizational structure and the individual differences of all stakeholders. Fraser and Hertzel (1990: as cited in Nikolaou, 2018) stated that conflicts in schools could be experienced between teachers, students and parents, and especially school administrators should have the social skills and academic knowledge necessary to successfully and harmoniously resolve conflicts without involving third parties. Similarly, Nural et al. (2012) stated that the effectiveness of school principals in the conflict management process increased depending on their communication skills and the school climate they created. On the other hand, Kapıcı and Radmard (2016) reveal the effect of the competencies and knowledge of school administrators on conflicts in educational organizations.

The process of managing conflicts in organizations is a process that should be carried out carefully, as it will affect the organizational climate and the success of the institution. In the literature, it was seen that various strategies were developed regarding the conflict management process. The first of these is the organizational conflict management strategies developed by Rahim (1983). Another model is developed by De Dreu et al. (2001:48). The five dimensions in the developed model are problem-solving (cooperation), compromising, avoiding, forcing and yielding strategies. The problem-solving (cooperation) strategy is used in situations where the parties to the conflict give high importance to both their own needs and the interests and needs of the other party, while the compromising is a strategy that involves the sharing of resources, where there is no winner, but where each individual is willing to protect their own goals. The third strategy of the model, the avoiding strategy, means not taking part in the conflict. According to the forcing strategy, one party makes the highest effort to achieve his own goals, even if the other party's feelings and goals are under threat (De Dreu et al., 2001). The yielding strategy, which is the last strategy of the model, is a method that involves giving up one's own goals for others, which results in the other party winning and losing himself (De Dreu et al., 2001).

As seen in the aforementioned studies, the competencies of school administrators in the process of managing conflicts in educational organizations are a factor that can ensure effective management of the process. There were studies in the literature examining the relationship between conflict management strategies and different variables. These variables include emotional intelligence levels (Özdemir and Özdemir, 2007), social intelligence levels (Şahin, 2016) and leadership behaviors (Uzun, 2014).

Karip (2015) stated that a well-managed conflict has positive results in terms of creating better relationships, developing psychological maturity and self-esteem, contributing to individual development, improving effectiveness and efficiency, enabling problems to be noticed and recognized, and contributing to

organizational change by providing better and creative solutions. As negative results, there were stress, reductions and problems in communication, an insecure organizational environment, low performance, low job satisfaction, low organizational commitment and increased resistance to change in the organization. It is possible to say that it is important to manage conflicts effectively and to have some knowledge, skills and competencies of school principals in this management process in order to avoid the emergence of these negative factors. Wall and Callister (1995) emphasized that the high level of emotional intelligence of individuals was effective in reducing communication problems, which were among the causes of conflict. It is known that individuals' high emotional intelligence enables them to have a solution-oriented perspective (Avcı, 2019). For this reason, it is possible to say that the solution-oriented approach, which is one of the postmodern social constructivist approaches that emerged with positive psychology and focuses on the solution, not the problem, is among the aforementioned knowledge and skills.

A solution-oriented approach is an approach that has been discussed in the literature since the early 1990s. Until the aforementioned years, psychology, which generally focused on the negative aspects of human nature such as failure, burnout and helplessness (Keleş, 2011), was introduced in 1999 to the concept of positive psychology, which focuses on making people happier, more successful and more normal, with a new perspective put forward by Martin Seligman. Seligman (2002) stated that positive psychology focused on positive subjective experiences. These experiences were having a sense of well-being and satisfaction regarding past experiences, focusing on emotional and bodily satisfactions regarding the present, and having feelings of optimism, and hope with constructivist cognition for the future. Seligman (2002) stated that while positive psychology emphasized concepts such as courage, love, interpersonal skills, development of aesthetic sense, forgiveness, being future-oriented and wisdom in the individual dimension, positive psychology focuses on civic values and concepts such as responsibility, tolerance, altruism, and work ethic at the social level.

This new approach has brought new approaches to psychological counseling processes. One of them is the solution-oriented approach, which entered the literature towards the beginning of the 1990s, as mentioned before. De Shazer (1987) and Berg and Miller (1992) emphasized that there are three basic rules of a solution-oriented approach. The first rule is "Don't fix it if it's not broken". This rule emphasized that it is not necessary to deal with a subject in which the clients in the counseling process do not have any problems. The second rule is to "find what works first and then do it more". This rule means that clients become aware of the issues they have explained and achieved in the interview process, and then, when a similar problem is experienced, they will be

able to use the path that leads them to success over and over again. The third rule is "Don't try again if it doesn't work" rule. This rule includes the suggestion that it is necessary to use a different method in order to obtain a different result in a failed subject, and that the unsuccessful method should not be tried again.

The solution-oriented approach mentioned is an approach that is used in different sectors and that contributes to the success of the leaders' teams. Saint et al. (2010) find that successful leaders are solution-oriented and overcome obstacles with a positive perspective in their study, in which they investigated the effect of leadership skills of managers in the health sector on preventing infections resulting from healthcare services provided in hospitals. Akça (2019), on the other hand, studies how to be solution-oriented in educational institutions. In the study on teachers, Akça (2019) discusses the sustainable development of teachers in terms of self-efficacy and having a solution-oriented approach, and emphasized that the positive perspectives of teachers on sustainable education are related to their solution-oriented approach. In their study, Henkin et al. (2000) examined the conflict management strategies of school administrators and stated that school administrators, who are successful in the process of managing conflicts, have a solution-oriented perspective where differences are resolved with a collaborative approach while the solution-oriented approach is achieved with the participation of the school's stakeholders in the process and the satisfaction of the teachers. Osenton and Chang (1999) applied the solution-oriented approach to classroom management. In their study, Osenton and Chang (1999), who prepared a solution-oriented classroom management plan in a classroom with first-year students, enable students to focus on correct and rules-compliant behaviors and to realize their correctness rather than mistakes. They stated that they should listen to the students for solutions. In addition, Osenton and Chang (1999) include in the suggestion part of their research that school administrators could adopt a solution-oriented approach and determine the policy of schools to prevent disciplinary problems.

In addition to the aforementioned studies, Sklare (2013) emphasized that it is important to teach the solution-oriented approach to school administrators. In his speech, Sklare (2013) stated that it is important to provide school administrators with a solution-oriented perspective in order to prevent violence against school administrators so that students can get rid of the negative point of view towards the school and the administrators, leave the school principal's room with a positive impression and a sense of hope. Sklare (2013) emphasized that it will positively affect the school climate and the solution-oriented approach, with the point of view that the solution to the problem experienced by the individual is within himself, is important for school

administrators to gain the ability to overcome these problems without being dependent on anyone in the process of solving the problems they experience at school.

The aim of this research, which is designed in light of this information, is to understand the relationship between school administrators' level of having a solution-oriented perspective and conflict management strategies. The research questions of this study carried out for this purpose are as follows:

1. What is the level of school administrators having a solution-oriented perspective?
2. What are the conflict management strategies preferred by school administrators?
3. Does the level of school administrators' solution-oriented perspective differ significantly according to gender, age and seniority?
4. Do the conflict management strategies preferred by school administrators differ significantly according to gender, age and seniority?
5. What is the correlation between the solution-oriented perspective of school administrators and their preferred conflict management strategies?

METHOD

Research design

The research was designed in the correlational survey research method, which is one of the quantitative research designs. In studies designed with correlational survey research method, the aim is to understand whether there is a change between two or more variables, and if so, how the change occurs (Karasar, 2011). The correlational survey research method was used in this research since the aim was to understand the relationship between the solution-oriented approach levels of school administrators and conflict management strategies.

Data collection tools

The data relating to the solution-oriented approach was gathered through the Solution Orientation Inventory developed by Grant, Cavanagh, Kleitman, Spence, Lakota and Yu (2012) and adapted into Turkish by Karahan and Hamarta (2015), which is a 12-item 6-point Likert-type scale. The data about conflict management strategies were gathered by the Conflict Management Strategies Scale developed by De Dreu (2001) and translated into Turkish by Polat and Metin (2012), which is a 19-item 5-point Likert-type scale.

The Solution Orientation Inventory is composed of three sub-dimension, which are *problem disengagement,*

goal orientation and *resource activation*. Each sub-dimension consists of 4 items and the general average of the scale can be taken. The Conflict Management Strategies scale, on the other hand, is a scale consisting of 5 different dimensions, the total score of which cannot be obtained. These dimensions are problem-solving, compromising, avoiding, forcing and yielding. The sub-dimension of yielding consists of 3 items and the other 4 sub-dimensions consist of 4 items.

Population and sample

The population of the research consisted of school administrators in primary and secondary schools in Turkey. The sample included 248 school administrators working in Bursa. 71% of the school principals participating in the research were male and 29% were female. 11% of the school administrators participating in the research were between the ages of 22-30, 57% of them were between the ages of 31-40, 29% of them were between the ages of 41-50 and 3% of them were between the ages of 51-60. When the seniority of the school administrators participating in the research was examined, it was seen that 22% of them were working as administrators for 1 to 10 years, 59% of them for 11 to 20 years, and 19% of them for 21 to 20 years.

Data collection and analysis process

The data were gathered through the scales explained in the data collection tools section. The scales were prepared in an online platform, which was Google Forms, and the link to the scales was sent to 289 school administrators via e-mails. The 248 answers were received and underwent analysis process. For analyzing the data, SPSS 25.0 software was used. Descriptive statistics, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis, and correlation analysis were conducted to find answers to research questions.

FINDINGS

First of all, the data on the solution-oriented approach and sub-dimensions of the school administrators participating in the research and the general averages of conflict management strategies were examined, and the results were presented in Table 1.

When the findings in Table 1 were examined, it was seen that school administrators had a solution-oriented approach above the average, and that goal orientations and resource activation from the sub-dimensions had the same average and that these two sub-dimensions were also above the average. It was seen that the level of school administrators' preference for problem-solving and

Table 1. Data on school administrators' levels of solution-oriented approach and conflict management strategies.

Dimensions	X	Sd
Solution-oriented approach	4.46	0.75
Problem disengagement	4.21	1.13
Goal orientation	4.59	0.96
Resource activation	4.59	0.98
Conflict management strategies		
Problem-solving	4.21	0.47
Compromising	4.02	0.66
Avoiding	2.49	0.88
Forcing	2.61	0.93
Yielding	2.14	0.81

compromising was above average, their preference for forcing was at an average level, and their levels of avoiding and yielding were below average. It was also among the findings that school administrators preferred problem-solving the most and yielding the least among the conflict management strategies.

In order to find answers to the 2nd and 3rd questions of the research, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied to the scales first. Since the results showed that the data were not normally distributed (p=0.01<0.05), all analyzes were conducted with non-parametric tests. Gender-related data were analyzed with the Mann-Whitney U test, and the results were presented in Table 2.

When the data in Table 2 were examined, it was seen that there was a significant difference between genders in terms of school administrators' solution-oriented approach (U=1880.00, p=0.01<0.05), together with its sub-dimensions problem disengagement (U=2096.00, p=0.014), goal orientation (U=2192,00, p=0.035<0.05), and resource activation (U=1984.00, p=0.004<0.05). In addition, problem-solving (U=2016.00, p=0.004<0.05) and compromising (U=2168.00, p=0.027<0.05) showed significant differences according to gender and in terms of other strategies, there was no significant difference according to gender.

The data on whether the solution-oriented approach and conflict management strategies of school administrators differ significantly according to age and seniority were analyzed with the Kruskal Wallis test, and the findings were presented in Table 3.

When the data in Table 3 were examined, it was seen that school administrators' levels of solution-oriented approach (X^2=8.957, p=0.03<0.05) and their sub-dimensions of problem disengagement (X^2=25.835, p=0.00<0.05) and the goal orientation (X^2=8.730, p=0.03<0.05) differed significantly according to age, while the sub-dimension of activating resources (X^2=0.655, p=0.88>0.05) did not show a significant difference. In

Table 2. Mann Whitney U results on school administrators' solution-oriented approaches and conflict management strategies related to gender.

Dimensions	Groups	n	$\bar{X}$	z	U	p
Solution-oriented approach	Female	72	4.24	3.295	1880.00	0.001
	Male	176	4.69			
Problem disengagement	Female	72	4.01	2.464	2096.00	0.014
	Male	176	4.42			
Goal orientation	Female	72	4.39	2.109	2192.00	0.035
	Male	176	4.79			
Resource activation	Female	72	4.39	2.902	1984.00	0.004
	Male	176	4.88			
Conflict management strategies						
Problem-solving	Female	72	4.09	2.850	2016.00	0.004
	Male	176	4.33			
Compromising	Female	72	3.93	2.216	2168.00	0.027
	Male	176	4.11			
Avoiding	Female	72	2.58	1.480	2352.00	0.139
	Male	176	2.40			
Forcing	Female	72	2.55	0.772	2536.00	0.440
	Male	176	2.67			
Yielding	Female	72	2.04	1.648	2312.00	0.099
	Male	176	2.30			

Table 3. Kruskal Wallis results on the difference between school administrators' solution-oriented approaches and conflict management strategies according to age and seniority.

Variables	Dimensions	Groups	n	$\bar{X}$	X^2	df	p	Significant difference
Age	**Solution-oriented approach**	22-30	27	4.23	8.957	3	0.03	(22-30)-(31-40),
		31-40	141	4.48				(22-30)-(51-60),
		41-50	72	4.45				(41-50)-(51-60)
		51-60	8	5.16				
	Problem disengagement	22-30	27	3.13	25.835	3	0.00	(22-30)-(31-40),
		31-40	141	4.39				(22-30)-(41-50),
		41-50	72	4.16				(22-30)-(51-60),
		51-60	8	5.25				(31-40)-(41-50), (41-50)-(51-60)
	Goal orientation	22-30	27	4.94	8.730	3	0.03	
		31-40	141	4.45				(22-30)-(51-60),
		41-50	72	4.64				(31-40)-(51-60),
		51-60	8	5.51				(41-50)-(51-60)

Table 3. Continues.

	Resource activation	22-30	27	4.63	0.655	3	0.88	-
		31-40	141	4.60				
		41-50	72	4.57				
		51-60	8	4.75				
	Conflict management strategies						
	Problem solving	22-30	27	4.19	2.410	3	0.49	-
		31-40	141	4.20				
		41-50	72	4.20				
		51-60	8	4.50				
	Compromising	22-30	27	4.31	10.585	3	0.02	
		31-40	141	3.88				(22-30)-(31-40),
		41-50	72	4.18				(31-40)-(41-50),
		51-60	8	4.00				
	Avoiding	22-30	27	2.38	2.893	3	0.41	-
		31-40	141	2.44				
		41-50	72	2.61				
		51-60	8	2.75				
	Forcing	22-30	27	3.31	21.095	3	0.00	(22-30)-(31-40),
		31-40	141	2.58				(22-30)-(41-50),
		41-50	72	2.32				(22-30)-(51-60),
		51-60	8	3.50				(31-40)-(51-60), (41-50)-(51-60)
	Yielding	22-30	27	1.91	5.550	3	0.14	-
		31-40	141	2.06				
		41-50	72	2.36				
		51-60	8	2.3				
	Solution-oriented approach	1-10	55	4.57	4.145	2	0.13	-
		11-20	146	4.36				
		21-30	47	4.69				
	Problem disengagement	1-10	55	4.25	1.046	2	0.59	-
		11-20	146	4.11				
		21-30	47	4.46				
	Goal orientation	1-10	55	4.84	8.728	2	0.01	(1-10)-(11-20),
		11-20	146	4.39				(11-20)-(21-30)
Seniority		21-30	47	4.89				
	Resource activation	1-10	55	4.63	0.287	2	0.86	-
		11-20	146	4.56				
		21-30	47	4.68				
	Conflict management strategies						
	Problem solving	1-10	55	4.38	7.972	2	0.02	(1-10)-(11-20),
		11-20	146	4.11				(11-20)-(21-30)
		21-30	47	4.32				

Table 3. Continues.

Compromising	1-10	55	4.28	13.496	2	0.00	(1-10)-(11-20),
	11-20	146	3.85				(11-20)-(21-30)
	21-30	47	4.25				
Avoiding	1-10	55	2.01	10.389	2	0.01	(1-10)-(11-20),
	11-20	146	2.64				(1-10)-(21-30),
	21-30	47	2.61				
Forcing	1-10	55	2.63	15.778	2	0.00	(1-10)-(21-30),
	11-20	146	2.82				(11-20)-(21-30)
	21-30	47	1.93				
Yielding	1-10	55	2.02	1.969	2	0.37	
	11-20	146	2.21				
	21-30	47	2.09				

terms of the age variable of school administrators, it was among the findings that there was a significant difference between the solution-oriented approach levels of those aged between the 22-30 ($\overline{X}$=4.23) and the ages of 31-40 ($\overline{X}$=4.48), those between the ages of 22-30 and 51-60 ($\overline{X}$=5.16), and those between the ages of 41- 50 ($\overline{X}$=4.45) and 51-60.

In terms of seniority, there was a significant difference among the levels of school administrators' goal orientation (X^2=8.728, p=0.01<0.05). When it comes to the solution-oriented approach levels (X^2=4.145, p=0.13>0.05), problem disengagement (X^2=1.046, p=0.59>0.05) and resource activation (X^2=0.287, p=0.86>0.05), there were no significant differences. In terms of the seniority, it was one of the findings that there was a significant difference between those who had seniority between 1-10 years ($\overline{X}$=4.84) and between 11-20 years ($\overline{X}$=4.39), between 11-20 years and 21-30 years ($\overline{X}$=4.89) related to the level of goal orientation of school administrators.

When the data in Table 3 was examined, there was a significant difference among the groups according to age variable in terms of the conflict management strategies of school administrators. The significant differences were valid for the strategies compromising (X^2=10.585, p=0.02<0.05) and forcing (X^2=21.095, p=0.00<0.05). The difference of school administrators' preference for the compromising strategy in terms of the age variable was between 22-30 years old ($\overline{X}$=4.31) and 31-40 years old ($\overline{X}$=3.88), 31-40 years old and 41-50 years old ($\overline{X}$=4.18). The significant difference for the forcing was between the ages of 22-30 ($\overline{X}$=3.31) and of 31-40 ($\overline{X}$=2.58), those between the ages of 22-30 and 41-50 ($\overline{X}$=2.32), of 22-30 and 51-60 ($\overline{X}$=3.50), those between the ages of 31-40 and 51-60, and those between the ages of 41-50 and 51-60.

When examined according to the seniority, there was a significant difference between the groups in terms of problem solving (X^2=7.972, p=0.02<0.05), compromising (X^2=13.496, p=0.00<0.05), avoiding (X^2=10.389, p=0.01<0.05) and forcing (X^2=15.778, p=0.00<0.05). The significant difference between the levels of school administrators' preference of problem solving was between 1-10 years ($\overline{X}$=4.38), 11-20 years' seniority ($\overline{X}$=4.11), 11-20 years' seniority and 21-30 years ($\overline{X}$=4.32). In terms of school administrators' preference for the compromising, Table 3 showed that there was a significant difference between those with 1-10 years of seniority ($\overline{X}$=4.28) and those with 11-20 years of seniority ($\overline{X}$=3.85), those with 11-20 years of seniority and 21-30 years of seniority ($\overline{X}$=4.25). It was also among the findings that there was a significant difference between those with 1-10 years of seniority ($\overline{X}$=2.01) and those with 11-20 years of seniority ($\overline{X}$=2.64), those with 1-10 years of seniority and 21-30 years of seniority ($\overline{X}$=2.61) in terms of avoiding strategy. The level of preference for the forcing strategy, which was the last finding regarding the conflict management strategies in terms of the seniority in Table 3, there was a significant difference between those with a seniority of 1-10 years ($\overline{X}$=2.63) and those with a seniority of 21-30 years ($\overline{X}$=1.93) and those with 11-20 years of seniority ($\overline{X}$=2.82) and those with 21-30 years of seniority.

The results of Spearman correlation analysis applied to test the direction and significance of the correlation between the solution-oriented approach levels of school administrators and their preferred conflict management strategies, which is the last question to be answered within the scope of the research, were presented in Table 4.

When the data in Table 4 were examined, it was seen that there is a significant relationship between the

Table 4. The results of the correlation test applied to the relationship between the solution-oriented approach levels of school administrators and their preferred conflict management strategies.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Solution-oriented approach	1	0.294**	0.264**	-0.578**	-0.376**	-0.258**
2. Problem-solving	0.294**	1	0.416**	-0.271**	-0.269**	0.175*
3 Compromising	0.264**	0.416**	1	0.019	0.018	0.086
4. Avoiding	-0.578**	-0.271**	0.019	1	0.396**	0.341**
5. Forcing	-0.376**	-0.269**	0.018	0.396**	1	0.304**
6. Yielding	-0.258**	0.175*	0.086	0.341**	0.304**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Solution-Oriented Approach and all avoidance strategies (p=0.01). When conflict management strategies were considered individually, there was a low positive relationship between solution-oriented approach and problem solving (r=0.294, p=0.01), and a low positive relationship between solution-oriented approach and compromising (r=0.264, p=0.01), a moderate negative relationship between solution-oriented approach and avoiding (r=-0.578, p=0.01), a low negative relationship between solution-oriented approach and forcing (r=-0.376, p=0.01), and there was a similarly low-level negative relationship between solution-oriented approach and yielding.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to understand the relationship between school administrators' level of having a solution-oriented approach and their preferred conflict management strategies. The first of the findings obtained within the scope of the research was that school administrators had a solution-oriented approach above the average. It was seen that school administrators' levels of goal orientation and resource activation, which were sub-dimensions of solution-oriented approach, were above the average and the same, while the sub-dimension of leaving the problem is above the average and less than the other two sub-dimensions. The levels' being above average level is a valuable finding, since it is expected that school administrators should have solution-focused approach in order to solve problems with an effective manner (Cavanagh and Grant, 2018). In addition, benefiting from solution-focused approach and improving the way of solution-focused thinking would help improve schools and bring achievement (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995).

When the preferences of school administrators regarding conflict management strategies were examined, it was seen that the levels of preference for problem solving and compromising were above the average, the level of forcing was at the average level, and the levels of avoiding and yielding were below the

average. It was also among the findings that school administrators prefer problem solving the most and yielding least among the conflict management strategies. These findings differed with some studies in the literature. For example, Günçavdı-Alabay (2022) found that school administrators preferred the avoiding the most. Similarly, Özkara and Tunç (2020) found that school administrators preferred the avoiding the most, according to teachers' opinions. However, similar to the findings of this study, Düzyol and Ada (2021) found that teachers preferred the highest level of problem-solving strategy in their study.

Within the scope of the research, it was also examined whether solution-oriented approach and conflict management strategies differ according to gender, age and seniority. It was observed that, in terms of the solution-oriented approach and all its sub-dimensions, male school administrators had a higher level of solution-oriented perspective than female school administrators in all dimensions. Among the conflict management strategies according to gender, there was only a significant difference between problem solving and compromising strategies. When the average of school administrators' conflict management strategies was examined, it was seen that female administrators prefer only avoiding strategy at a higher rate, and male school administrators' preference levels were higher than women in all other strategies. This finding differed from the literature. For example, Özkara and Tunç (2020) found that female managers preferred conflict management strategies at a higher rate. However, while the strategies preferred by the school administrators according to the opinions of the teachers in the said study were examined, it was possible to say that the differences occurred because the data were collected from the school administrators themselves in this study.

When the degree to which school administrators had a solution-oriented approach, which is considered in terms of age variable, was examined, it was seen that there was a significant difference between age groups in all dimensions except for the sub-dimension of resource activation. It was among the findings that the highest level in the solution-oriented approach and the other two sub-dimensions belongs to the 51-60 age group. It is

possible to explain the reason for this with intergenerational differences. It is possible to say that the school administrators in the 51-60 age group, who were members of Generation X, prefer to take action for the solution of the problems because they do not approach the events individually or selfishly, but have a collectivist perspective and give importance to discipline (Lissitsa and Laor, 2021). In the conflict management strategies preferred by school administrators, there was a significant difference between only compromising and avoiding strategies in terms of different age groups. When the level of school administrators' preference for conflict management strategies was examined, it was seen that the age group that prefers problem-solving, avoiding and forcing at the highest level is the group 51-60; the 22-30 age group preferred compromising and 41-50 age group preferred yielding at the highest level. The fact that there were differences between the levels of conflict management and solution-oriented approach according to age showed that it could be beneficial to create intergenerational learning environments among the administrators of educational organizations.

According to the variable of seniority, it was seen that from the solution-oriented perspective of school administrators, only the goal orientation sub-dimension differed significantly according to seniority, and among the conflict management strategies they preferred, except for only the adaptation strategy, all the others had a significant difference. It was observed that the highest preference rate in the solution-oriented approach and all its sub-dimensions belongs to school administrators with a seniority of 21-30 years. In conflict management, school administrators with 1-10 years of seniority prefer problem-solving and compromising; on the other hand, it was among the findings that school administrators with seniority of 11-20 years had the highest average in avoiding, forcing, and yielding. It was seen that problem-solving and compromising were preferred mainly by new school administrators. It is possible to say that the reason for this is that the newly appointed school administrators attach importance to the resolution of the conflicts in a way that makes all parties happy.

The last question of the research was whether there was a significant relationship between school administrators' solution-oriented approach and conflict management strategies. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between school administrators having a solution-oriented perspective and their preferred conflict management strategies. Having a solution-oriented approach was positively correlated with problem-solving and compromising. It was observed that there was a negative relationship between the solution-oriented approach and the avoiding, forcing and yielding strategy. It was a finding that can be explained by the fact that the school administrator, who had a solution-oriented perspective, was keen on problem-solving or reconciliation, and wanted to solve the problems.

Similarly, it is possible to say that a negative relationship between them is an expected result since a solution-oriented school administrator avoiding the solution of problems or approaching the parties with which he has problems with the strategies of forcing or yielding will not contribute to the solution of the problem.

In line with the findings obtained within the scope of the research, it is possible to suggest to the policy-makers that in-service training programs be prepared in order to provide a solution-oriented perspective to the school administrators and to better understand the conflict management strategies. Also, preparing and applying a solution-focused program and making it a part of the school would be beneficial for both students and administrative staff (Evans, 2011). In addition, since there were differences between administrators of different age groups and seniority, it is possible for school administrators to interact with each other through intergenerational learning programs and to teach a solution-oriented perspective to each other. Also, it can be said that future researchers conducting qualitative research by collecting quantitative data from administrators working in different institutions or by interviewing school administrators will enrich the literature.

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