The Relationship between Conflict Management Styles of School Principals and Teachers' Cynicism Levels

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Abstract. The aim of this research is to determine the relationship between the conflict management styles of school principals and the organizational cynicism levels of teachers according to the perceptions of teachers. Relational screening model was used in the study. The universe of the study consists of 1150 teachers working in Maltepe district of Istanbul in the 2021-2022 academic year. The sample selected by random sampling was composed of 288 teachers. In the study, as data collection tools, the Conflict Management Styles Scale was used to determine the conflict management styles of school principals and the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers was used to determine the organizational cynicism levels of teachers. The research revealed that, according to the perceptions of the teachers, the school principals used the highest level of integrating style as the conflict management style, then the compromising, avoiding, obliging styles respectively and the lowest level of dominating style. It was determined that the organizational cynicism levels of the teachers were at the "intermediate level". As a result of the research, a weak negative significant correlation was revealed between the conflict management styles of school principals and the organizational cynicism levels of teachers. When looked at in the context of conflict management styles, a moderately negative significant relationship emerged between integrating style and organizational cynicism, a moderately positive relationship with dominating style, and a weakly negative relationship with compromising style and compromising style. There was no statistically significant correlation between avoiding style and organizational cynicism.

Keywords: Conflict, conflict management styles, cynicism, organizational cynicism.

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The success of the organization largely depends on the attitudes of the e organization members towards their organizations. The existence of problems in the organization may cause organization members to have some negative attitudes towards their organizations. The concept of organizational cynicism consists of the negative attitudes that organization members develop towards the organization (Kalağan & Güzeller, 2017, p.83). Although the concept of cynicism was introduced by Socrates' student Antisthenes (444-365 BC), this concept became known to Antisthenes' student Diogenes of Sinop. It is thought that the concept of cynicism may have come from Cynosarges, a town near Athens where the schools of the cynics were located, or from the Greek word "kyon", which means dog. Although the concept of cynicm has been referred to by different terms such as "cynic" and "cynical" for centuries, it has generally been used as "cynicism" in English and foreign literature (Dean et al., 1998, p.342). In the Oxford English Dictionary, the concept of cynicism is defined as "a person who tends not to believe in the sincerity or goodness of the motives and actions of individuals and expresses this tendency in a sarcastic and acrimonious way, a faultfinder". In professional life, cynical individuals use humor a lot to criticize their organizations that they despise and to attract people's attention. Cynical individuals behave in various manners such as resentment, sarcastic gestures, secret comments, insults, insinuations. (Dean t al., 1998, p.342; Mathur et al., 2013, p.63).

According to Mathur et al. (2013, p.63), organizational cynicism is a negative attitude that involves individuals moving away from the organization as a result of believing that it is not honest and will always try to deceive its organization members. Organizational cynicism emerges when organization members do not trust their organization and feel that the organization cannot be trusted. Definitions of organizational cynicism are often associated with emotions such as disappointment and anger (Durrah et al., 2019, p. 4). Abraham (2000, p. 269-270) states that in organizational cynicism, the principles of honesty, justice and sincerity are sacrificed for the sake of the managers' own interests, which leads to hidden motives and deceptive behaviors. Cynicism in the organization can be intended for all targets in the organization, including organizational culture, superiors, subordinates, and the role of the individual, external parties such as suppliers or customers, and colleagues. Researchers have noted that in modern workplaces cynicism is prevalent. It is seen that there have been many studies on organizational cynicism in recent year's studies. This situation may be an indicator for the cynical attitudes of the workers in the organization have reached an important level. In addition, it can be said that it is important for organizations to identify and eliminate

organizational cynicism attitudes and elements that cause organizational cynicism in their organizations in order to have efficient and motivated organization members.

Cynical organization members think that the management of the organization that they work for is not honest, that other organization members want to make use of them and that they are not treated fairly. It is known that the cynical organization member is pessimistic about the success of the changes made in the organization. In addition, it is believed that cynical workers will tend to think that the possibility of failure of change attempts may be due to the inadequacy and laziness of those who propose change (Eaton, 2000, p.3). Such beliefs and feelings can harm organizations and become a limiting factor for organizations in achieving their goals. Cynical workers are often frustrated, despair, and do not believe in their organization (Abraham, 2000, p.270). In addition, it is thought that the unsuccessful change efforts in the past in organizations, the inadequate information about the change to be made, and the belief that the change efforts will be waste of effort cause cynicism to rise (Khan, et al., 2016, p. 142).

Organizational cynicism has three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. The cognitive dimension defines the belief that organization members are individuals who are dishonest, untrusted, lazy, and think only of their own interests (Cook & Medley, 1954, act. Camgöz et al., 2017, p.42); the emotional dimension defines the emotional reactions towards the organization (psychological reactions such as tension, anxiety) (Durrah et al., 2019, p.4); the behavioral dimension defines the critical discourses and negative behaviors in the organization (Abraham, 2000, p.270). In addition, five main conceptualizations characterize the literature on cynicism. These are personality (general) cynicism, social (institutional) cynicism, employee (worker) cynicism, organizational change cynicism and professional (business) cynicism (Dean et al., 1998, pp. 342-343). Personality cynicism, also called general cynicism, is defined as the common characteristic of emotionally exhausted people who have a very weak relationship with other people and who exhibit a cruel and cynical attitude towards other people. Individuals with cynical personality believe that there is no one left in the world who is trustworthy and has strong value judgments, and that the world is dishonest, scheming, selfish and indifferent (Chiaburu et al., 2013, p.5; Matteson & Miller, 2013, p.55). Communal, institutional, or social cynicism states the fact that individuals do not trust the governments and institutions of their own state. Social cynicism generally means having negative feelings towards society (Durrah et al., 2019, p.4). Employee cynicism states the results of individuals' behaviours and negative attitudes of employees. Employee cynicism often targets organizations, managers of organizations, and other elements in the organization, and involves the

employee's negative feelings such as underestimation, despair and frustration with the elements they are targeting. (Durrah et al., 2019, p.4; Dean et al., 1998, p.344). Stanley et al. (2013, p.435) define organizational change cynicism as employee's disbelief in the stated motives of his or her management for any organizational change. Professional cynicism or business cynicism means the loss of faith in the individuals in the organization, the happiness of serving the organization and the pride felt for the work done (Qian, 2007, p.7).

Cynical individuals who believe that people are insecure and liars, who perceive many things negatively, are expected to be in constant conflict with others (Boz, 2016 p.63). However, although cynical attitudes are the source of conflict, the way individuals approach conflicts with others are also a factor in the development of cynical attitudes. Particularly in conflicts between the manager and the people managed, managers' conflict management styles can positively or negatively affect the development of cynical employees' cynical attitudes (Gökçe et al., 2017; Chiaburu et al., 2013; Yılmaz and Şencan, 2018). This makes it important to focus on the impact of the manager's conflict management style or strategies on employee cynicism.

"Conflict is a social phenomenon that has been identified in all social communities; that has arisen within and/or between individuals, groups, organizations or nations" (Rubin, 1994, act. Öztaş & Akın, 2009, p.10). Therefore, since the concept of conflict means different things to different people, it is considerably difficult to make a single definition of this concept that is acceptable for everyone (Gümüşeli, 1994: 24). According to Burandas (2001, act. Papoutsi, 2020, p.207), conflict is a situation in which the behavior of one individual or group deliberately tries to prevent another individual or group from achieving its goals. Humans and all other living things have the obliging to survive, to struggle with their environment constantly and to conflict when necessary. Conflict is a state of tension that occurs as a result of situations that prevent the satisfaction of physiological and socio-psychological needs. When individuals or groups have to work together in an organization, it brings some problems and this may cause normal activities in the organization to stop or become complicated. Conflicts can occur when two or more people or groups disagree on various issues or are upset because of different points of view. Conflict is one of the inevitable outputs of individual and group differences. (Eren, 2000, p.527; Agrawal, 2021, p.57). It is possible to say that there will be conflicts at various levels in organizations, because wherever there is any community, the members of the community will be in communication and interaction, and conflict will be inevitable. Since the personalities, values and attitudes of the individuals in the same organization are different, disagreements are experienced and conflicts emerge in the organization. At this point, we can state

that it is important to manage all levels of conflict that may arise in organizations effectively. Conflict management is a fact that takes the time and energy of the members of the organization. A study shows that approximately 20% of managers' time is spent on conflict management (Levent, 2005, p.17; Thomas and Schmidt, 1976, act. Rahim, Garrett & Buntzman, 1992, p.423). For this reason, we can say that effective conflict management is important in terms of organizational efficiency, cost and organizational peace.

In modern approaches, it is accepted that organizational conflicts can be functional. But in neoclassical and especially in classical approaches, all conflicts are considered negative in all cases. According to the classical approach, conflict harms the organization and is therefore undesirable. Here, conflict arises as a result of disobedience and must be prevented and avoided. This approach has lost its validity today because of the belief that it neglects change and creativity. The neo-classical approach states that conflicts can exist naturally and still need to be eliminated. According to the modern approach, organizational conflict is inevitable and this approach sees organizational conflict as a favorable indicator of productivity, effectiveness, and creativity (Robbins and Judge, 2011, act. Yılmaz & Şencan, 2018, p.119; Agrawal, 2021, p. 58). In modern approach, organizations are social systems that are in constant interaction. In this system, provided that it can be managed in a balanced manner, sometimes creating conflicts will increase the dynamism of the organization (Donat, 2019: 18). Some researches even show that conflict leads individuals to increase their knowledge (Akhlaghimofrad & Farmamanesh, 2021, p.2082). Today, it is generally accepted that organizational conflict must be managed rather than resolved in order to increase individual, group and system-wide effectiveness (Rahim et al., 1992, p. 424).

The concepts of conflict resolution and conflict management are semantically different. While conflict resolution means reducing or eliminating conflict, managing conflict does not necessarily require the reduction or elimination of conflict. (Rahim et al., 1992, p. 424). Rahim and Bonoma (1979) discussed conflict handling styles in two main dimensions: self-interest and concern for others. The first dimension describes the level (high or low) at which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own interests. The second dimension describes the level (high or low) at which the individual wishes to satisfy the interests of others. The combination of the two dimensions results in five specific styles of handling conflict. The style of integrating (high interest in self and others) involves openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to arrive at an effective solution acceptable to both parties. The integrating style is associated with problem solving, which can lead to creative solutions, and in this style, clear communication is important. The obliging (low interest in oneself

and high interest in others) style is associated with trying to ignore differences and emphasize commonalities to satisfy the interests of the other party. The style of dominating (high interest in oneself and low interest in others) is identified with winning. The individual forces behaviors to achieve his goals or gain his position and does not care about the other party. The style of avoiding (low interest in self and others) is associated with withdrawal, evasion, or avoiding. The style of compromising (moderate interest in self and others) involves giving up something in order to make a decision acceptable to both parties (Rahim and Psenicka, 2002, p.307; Gümüşeli, 1994, p.84-108).

It is thought that good management of the conflict within the organization rather than eliminating it benefits the climate of the organization and the development of the organizational culture, but the conflicts that are not well managed increase the problems (Kılıç, 2006, p.23). Conflicts are neither completely bad nor completely damaging. Conflicts can be a source of positive change. In fact, some studies state that conflict is essential for authentic participation, power distribution, and democracy. The key to effective conflict management is to encourage constructive conflict, while avoiding destructive conflicts and softening them. That is, conflict can be applied as a creative force for positive change rather than a necessary iniquity that can be controlled. In addition, conflict can be used to balance power, strengthen communication, and find the strength to manage differences (Hoy & Miskel, 2010, p.231). As a matter of fact, according to the results of the research conducted by Gökçe et al. (2017), conflict reduces the effect of cynicism on the intention to leave of employment. According to the results of this research, we can say that a well-managed conflict which is at a certain level benefits the organization. However, all unresolved conflicts increase anxiety within the organization and reduce the productivity and performance of organization members (Agrawal, 2021, p.57). The research results of Akdemir et al. (2016) show that there is a negative correlation between job performance and organizational cynicism, that the level of work performance decreases as the level of organizational cynicism increases, and that the level of organizational cynicism increases as the level of work performance decreases. Seval (2006, p.246) similarly stated that in organizations where conflict is not well managed, the motivation of organization members will decrease, and therefore productivity will decrease. Ersöz (2010) concluded in his research that, if managers cannot manage the conflict in a way that keeps the level of conflict at a low level, the level of job satisfaction in organization members will decrease, and Tink (2019) concluded in his research that cynicism will increase as the level of job satisfaction decreases. When we analyse all this information, we can say that a weakly managed conflict negatively affects motivation, job

performance and job satisfaction in the organization members of the organization and this negative effect may cause cynicism in the organization over time.

McGregor (1960, act. Aydın, 2010, p.85-86), in his X and Y theories, stated that the thoughts of managers about people are the main identifiers of their management styles. In these theories, which are classified as opposing assumptions, theory X has a pessimistic assumption about human nature, while theory Y has an optimistic assumption. According to theory X, people don't like work, they run away from work when necessary, and they need to be guided. Therefore, individuals must be dominated at work, controlled, and threatened by punishment. According to theory Y, people do not hate work, can practice self-management and self-control, and accept work responsibility. The distrustful view of people and the authoritarian management styles approach in theory X can lead to cynicism in the organization. According to the research results of Balay et al. (2013), the level of cynicism of the organization members significantly varies according to the management styles variable of the managers. The level of organizational cynicism of organization members in organizations with a democratic management style is lower than the level of organizational cynicism of organization members in organizations with an irrelevant or authoritarian management style. As a result of his research, Tink (2019) stated that organization members often complain about management style and this may cause cynicism in organization members. Mirvis & Kanter (1991, act. Uzuntarla et al., 2015, p.549) stated the characteristics of organizations with negative attitudes as follows: the organization has dominating practices; the organization has a one-way communication with organization members; the organization implements a policy that is dishonest to its organization members; the organization supports managers who mistreat their organization members. Aytürk (2010, p.315) stated that an authoritarian management style may lead to hierarchical conflicts. According to Sayeed (1990, pp. 28-42), authoritarian managers are expected to choose an authoritarian-supported conflict management style, while supportive managers are expected to choose an integrating conflict management style. In addition, the author concluded in his research that there is a strong relationship between authoritarian management style and dominating conflict management style, and a strong relationship between supportive management style and integrating conflict management style. Therefore, a positive relationship may be expected between organizational cynicism and dominating style, which is one of the conflict management styles, and a negative relationship may be expected between organizational cynicism and integrating style, which is one of the conflict management styles.

According to the research results of Tink (2019) there are factors such as hierarchical structures, disagreements, nepotism, heavy workload, negative thoughts about management, belief in injustice that can cause conflict. In addition, according to the results of the research, when conflict emerges in organization members, their work motivation decreases, reluctance begins and cynicism emerges as a result of these negative attitudes. The results of the research of Karademir (2016) and Helvacı & Çetin (2012) present that, nepotism and negative thoughts towards management emerge as factors that reveal organizational cynicism. Chiaburu et al. (2013), James (2005), Girgin and Gümüşeli (2018), Özgen & Turunç (2017), Bölükbaşı (2013) found a significant negative correlation between organizational cynicism and organizational justice. According to the researches of Çopur & Atanur Baskan (2020), it has been concluded that in order to reduce organizational cynicism, organization members should be treated fairly and their workload should be reduced. Therefore, we can see the nepotism, negative thoughts towards management, heavy workload and injustice elements that will occur in the organization as the reasons for the formation of both conflict and cynicism.

Bağrıyanık (2017) states that organization members may have negative attitudes within the organization as a result of the conflict that may occur between the values of the organization members and the values of the organization. According to the research conducted by Bond et al. (2004), social cynicism has negative effects on both cooperation and reconciliation, and therefore individuals with high levels of social cynicism often refuse cooperation and compromising in resolving conflict. Keashly & Nowell (2011, act. Yılmaz & Şencan, 2018, p.120) stated that seniority, title and status are important in the relationship between conflict management styles and cynicism. Abaslı (2018) stated that organizational injustice can be the source of the conflicts within the organization that may cause cynical attitudes in organization members. The results of the research conducted by Yılmaz & Şencan (2018) on 384 managers and organization members working in domestic and foreign insurance companies and banks in Turkey show that the high level of conflict management and low level of organizational cynicism in the organization makes it possible to successfully manage conflicts between subordinates and superiors. According to the research conducted by Gökçe et al. (2017) on health workers, interpersonal conflict increases as cynicism increases. The research results of Chiaburu et al. (2013) showed that cynicism harms performance and harms teamwork due to cynical people's unwillingness to cooperate and resolve conflicts. According to the research results of Toksoy (2017), as the level of interpersonal conflict increases, the level of organizational cynicism also increases. The results of these studies suggest that there may be a relationship between conflict management styles and cynicism.

As many organizations, educational organizations have to keep up with the changes in the world. Within the school, which is an educational organization, it is of great importance that students, teachers and school administrators unite around the school objectives, are connected to the school and feel that they belong to the school. The concept of conflict is seen as important in educational organizations as in other organizations. Because of the constant interaction of schools with students, teachers, school administrators, parents and the school environment creates a suitable environment for conflict. Therefore, we can say that one of the problems that negatively affect educational organizations is organizational conflict. The most common conflict in the school is the conflict between the teacher and the school principal. It is very important for school principals to be able to manage the conflicts well for to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school (Gümüşeli, 1994, p.2-16), because the positive or negative outcome of the conflict is directly related to school principal's conflict management style. If the conflict is well managed by the principal, this contributes to the development of the school. At this point, it can be said that the realization of the aims of the school is directly proportionate to the school principals' conflict management ability (Yiğit, 2015, p.27; Özgan, 2006, p.4). According to Sarpkaya (2002, p.425), based on the fact that conflict is more concrete in educational organizations that have people in their input, process and output, and conflict is inevitable in nature or society; it would be more accurate to learn the correct methods and techniques of managing conflict in educational organizations instead of avoiding or resolving it.

James (2005, p.6) states that almost all of organizations have organization members with cynical attitudes. Accordingly, in educational organizations, the presence of organization members with cynical attitudes is inevitable. Since educational organizations are open systems, they are influenced by the characteristics of students, teachers, school administrators, other school members and the school environment. Schools, as public institutions, operate in an organizational environment that is more closely tied to the political system, less flexible, less responsive and less participatory. It is thought that such situations may also lead to organizational cynicism (Mathur et al., 2013, p.63). The effective and efficient work of teachers, administrators and other organization members in educational organizations depends largely on the bond that organization members establish with the school, the level of adoption of the school's goals and values, and the level of identification with the school. Having these situations may be possible by ensuring organization members' positive attitudes about school. For this reason, it has become important to carry out studies on organizational cynicism in all educational organizations and in schools in order to identify and solve negative attitudes (Akar, 2018, p.2101). Teachers' negative thoughts, feelings or behaviors towards the school can lead to the

formation and development of organizational cynicism in schools. This will adversely affect teachers' job satisfaction (Dean et al., 1998, p.348), job performance (Kim, Bateman, Gilbreath and Andersson, 2009, p.1451) and commitment (Virtanen et al., 2021, p.7). According to Boz (2016, p.155), teachers who work under the heavy responsibility of taking care of students from many different socioeconomic levels and their families wear down over time, and as a result, conflicts may arise between them and they may develop negative attitudes towards their schools. In addition, as a result of the research, it was stated that there may be miscommunications between the teacher and the administrator over time in the school and this may lead to conflict.

When the results of the researches are examined, it is revealed that the high level of cynicism of teachers can harm their professions and that organizational cynicism has negative effects on the organization and organization members. In the same studies, it is revealed that, the greatest responsibility in preventing the emergence of cynicism attitudes in schools belongs to school principal (Kalağan ve Güzeller, 2010; Helvacı & Çetin, 2012; Balay, Kaya & Cülha, 2013; Doğan & Ugurlu, 2014; Karademir, 2016; Strong et al., 2017; Özgen & Turunç, 2017; Bağrıyanık, 2017). The conflict management styles that school principals perform in the school affect the peace and effectiveness of the school and the relationship between the principal and the teacher (Gümüşeli, 1994; Ural, 1997; Apple, 1998; Rock, 1998; Ugurlu, 2001; Yigit, 2015; Arslan, 2020; Demirtas, 2021). When the results of this research are examined, it is thought that there is a relationship between the conflict management styles of school principals and the organizational cynicism levels of teachers.

As seen above, although many studies have been conducted on conflict management style in schools and the cynicism variables to be examined in this research, no study has been found that directly addresses the relationship between school principals' conflict management styles and teachers' cynicism levels. Therefore, the problem of this research was determined as examining the relationship between school principals' conflict management styles and teachers' conflict management styles.

Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to determine the relationship between the conflict management styles of school principals and the cynicism levels of teachers according to the perceptions of secondary school teachers. For this purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought:

- What are the conflict management styles of school principals according to the perceptions of secondary school teachers?

- What is the level of cynicism perception of secondary school teachers?

- According to the perceptions of secondary school teachers, is there a significant correlation between the conflict management styles of school principals and the cynism levels of teachers?

- According to the perceptions of secondary school teachers, principals' conflict management styles serve as a significant predictor of teachers' cynicism levels?

Method

Research Model

Relational screening model was used in the study. In line with this model, it was investigated whether there was a relationship between the conflict management styles of secondary school principals and the cynicism levels of secondary school teachers.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of branch teachers working in public secondary schools in Maltepe district of Istanbul in the 2021-2022 academic year. There are a total of 30 public secondary schools in the research population. The total number of teachers working in these secondary schools is 1150. Sampling was done through simple random sampling, which is "the type of sampling in which all the elements in the population have the chance to be chosen equally" (Karasar, 2020, p.151). Scales were distributed to participants serving as secondary school teachers in the Maltepe district, and incomplete or erroneous scales were excluded. The sample size for the study was determined for a population of 1,150 using the following formula;

$$n = \frac{N.t^2.p.q}{d^2.(N-1)+t^2.p.q}$$

According to the above formula calculation, the sample size was determined as n=288. According to this formula, a sample size of at least 288 is required to adequately represent the population. The sample size for this study is also 288. The sample group represents approximately 25% of the population.

Data Collection Tools

The research data were collected by using two scales. The first of these scales was the Conflict Management Styles Scale developed by M. Afzalur Rahim and adapted to Turkish by Gümüşeli (1994), and the second was the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers developed by Sağır &

Oğuz (2012). The Conflict Management Styles Scale is a 5-point likert type scale consisting of 28 questions. The rating on the scale is always (5), most often (4), occasionally (3), seldom (2), and merely (1). In the reliability test conducted by Gümüşeli (1994), Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was found between. 72 and. 77. When the reliability coefficient of the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers is examined, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient is .89. The scale is a 5-point likert type scale consisting of 25 questions. The rating on the scale is strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). In the interpretation of the results, the degree ranges were determined as 1.00-1.79, 1.80-2.59, 2.60-3.39, 3.40-4.19 and 4.20-5.00. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis results for the scales used in this study are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1.

Reliability Levels of the Conflict Management Styles Scale and Its Sub-Dimensions

Scale and Sub-Dimension Name	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Integrating Style	0.942
Obliging Style	0.874
Dominating Style	0.876
Avoiding Style	0.665
Compromising Style	0.889
Conflict Management Styles Scale	0.904

Table 2.

Reliability Level of the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers

Scale Name	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers	0.901

According to the Cronbach's Alpha value ranges specified in Alpar's study (2020, p. 582), the Conflict Management Styles Scale, as well as its sub-dimensions of Integration, Compromise, Dominating, and Accommodation Styles, exhibit a high level of reliability. The Avoidance Style sub-dimension demonstrates a moderately reliable level, while the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers also shows a high level of reliability.

Process

During the data collection process of the research, participants' voluntary participation in the research was taken as basis. In this context, the scale forms were filled in after the consent form presented to the teachers was signed.

Data Analysis

A statistical analysis package program was used to analyze the data collected in the research. Techniques were used for the analysis of the data by taking into account the sub-problems of the research. Arithmetic means and standard deviation values were used to determine school principals' perceptions of conflict management styles, as well as to identify teachers' perceived levels of cynicism. Normality tests for the scales used in the study were conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test for the Scales

Scale and Sub-Dimensions Mean Scores	Statistic	df	Sig.
Conflict Management Scale Mean Scores	0.039	288	0.200
Conflict Management Scale Integrating Sub-Dimension Mean Scores	0.116	288	0.000*
Conflict Management Scale Obliging Sub-Dimension Mean Scores	0.100	288	0.000*
Conflict Management Scale Dominating Sub-Dimension Mean Scores	0.067	288	0.003*
Conflict Management Scale Avoiding Sub-Dimension Mean Scores	0.070	288	0.002*
Conflict Management Scale Compromising Sub-Dimension Mean Scores	0.104	288	0.200
Organizational Cynicism Scale Mean Scores	0.037	288	0.200

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Examining Table 3 reveals that, according to the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the mean scores of the Conflict Management Scale and the Organizational Cynicism Scale conform to a normal distribution ($p>0.05$). However, the sub-dimensions of the Conflict Management Scale do not follow a normal distribution ($p<0.05$).

Results

The first aim of the study was to determine what the conflict management styles of school principals are according to the perceptions of secondary school teachers. The findings are shown in Table 4.

Table 4**.**

Findings on School Principals' Conflict Management Styles

	$\bar{\textbf{X}}$	**SS**
The Integrating Style	3.40	1.08
The Obliging Style	3.06	0.98
The Dominating Style	3.01	0.95
The Avoiding Style	3.19	0.70
The Compromising Style	3.29	0.96

When the average results stated in Table 4 are examined, according to the perceptions of secondary school teachers, it is seen that school principals use the integrating style "most often" and "occasionally" use compromising, dominating, avoiding and compromising styles. According to the perceptions of teachers, we can say that the conflict management styles of school principals are integrating, compromising, avoiding, obliging and dominating from the highest level to the lowest level. Given the characteristics of schools, this result can be considered to be a consistent one. Because although the arithmetic mean values in the table show that according to teacher perceptions, school principals prefer the integrating style more than others; they seem to use all other conflict management styles occasionally on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the results can be interpreted as managers using each style on a case-by-case basis in conflict management.

The second aim of the research is to determine the level of cynicism perception of secondary school teachers. The findings are shown in Table 5.

Table 5**.**

Teachers' Levels of Cynicism

	$\bar{\textbf{X}}$	**SS**
Organizational Cynicism	2.85	0.67

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the perception of cynicism of the teachers is at a moderate level ($\bar{X}$=2.85). This average equals to the expression "Neutral" ($\bar{X}$: 2.60-3.39) in the scale. We can think of this statement as that teachers generally have a moderate sense of cynicism and that they do not have a sense of cynicism that would disturb them.

The third aim of the study is to determine whether there is a significant correlation between the conflict management styles of school principals and the cynicism levels of teachers according to the perceptions of secondary school teachers. Since the sample distribution of the Conflict Management Styles Scale and the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers was compatible with the normal distribution, the correlation coefficient between the two scales was calculated with the Pearson Correlation coefficient. The sample distribution of the Conflict Management Styles Scale was not normally distributed. For this reason, the relationship between the Conflict Management Styles Scale and the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers was examined with the Spearman Correlation Coefficient.

Table 6.

Correlation Coefficient between School Principals' Level of Perception of Conflict Management Styles and Level of Perception of Teachers' Cynicism

	Öğretmenlere Yönelik Örgütsel Sinizm Ölçeği
The Integrating Style	-0.415*
The Obliging Style	-0.315*
The Dominating Style	0.474*
The Avoiding Style	-0.013
The Compromising Style	-0.346*

When evaluating the correlation table, values between 0.1 and 0.3 are generally considered to indicate a low correlation, values between 0.3 and 0.6 represent a moderate correlation, and values of 0.6 and above are considered a high correlation (Hair et al., 2009). When Table 6 is examined, it is found that, there is a moderate negative correlation between the integration style and organizational cynicism (r = -0.415), a weak negative correlation between the compromising style and organizational cynicism (r = -0.315), a weak negative correlation between the accommodating style and organizational cynicism (r = -0.346), and a moderate positive correlation between the dominating style and organizational cynicism (r = 0.474), all of which are statistically significant.

There is no significant correlation between avoiding style and organizational cynicism (p>0.05). These findings are stands with the characteristics of conflict management styles. Because the integrating style with the highest correlation and the dominating style are the styles that contain opposite behaviors and interventions in terms of their characteristics. Therefore, the finding that the level of cynicism will decrease even at a moderate level if the integrating style is used, and that it will increase moderately if the dominating style is used, stands with the results of other researches. These findings show that the results of the research are in line with the literature.

The fourth aim of the study is to determine whether, according to middle school teachers' perceptions, the conflict management styles of school principals significantly predict teachers' levels of cynicism. To examine the extent to which school principals' conflict management styles affect teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism, the Organizational Cynicism Mean Scores were taken as the dependent variable and the Conflict Management Scale Mean Scores as the independent variable, and Regression Analysis was applied. In Regression Analysis, it is sufficient for the dependent variable to meet the assumption of normality. In this case, the Organizational Cynicism Scale Mean Scores meet the normality assumption. The scatter plot between the dependent and independent variables is shown in Figure 1.
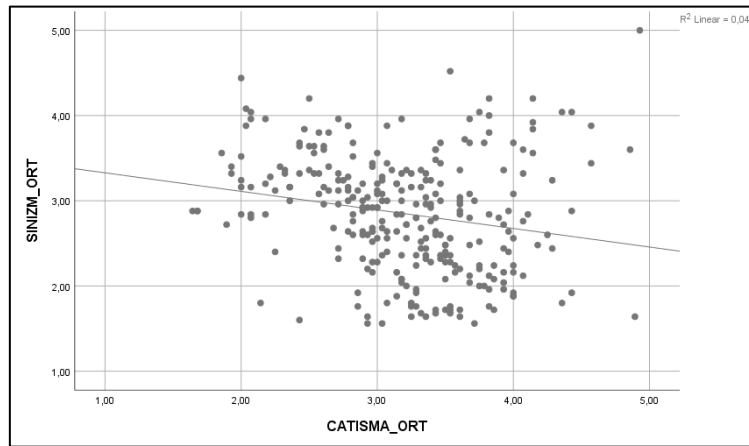

Figure 1. Scatter Plot.

Upon examining the graph, we can conclude that there is a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The model applied to determine the extent to which school principals' conflict management styles affect teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism is presented in Table 7.

Table 7.

Significance of the Model and Model Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	F	Sig.	R^2
(Constant)	3.545	0.203	17.424	0.000*			
Conflict Management Sclae Mean Scores	-0.218	0.062	-3.490	0.001*	12.179	0.001*	0.041

*p<0.05

According to Table 7, the independent variable, Conflict Management Styles, explains 4.1% of the variance in the dependent variable, Organizational Cynicism. Additionally, the established regression model is found to be statistically significant (p<0.05). The independent variable, Conflict Management Scale Mean Scores, is also found to be statistically significant (p<0.05).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between school principals' conflict management styles and teachers' organizational cynicism levels according to teachers' perceptions. For this purpose, first of all, school principals' conflict management styles were determined. It has been observed that school principals use the integrating style "most frequently" among conflict management styles, compromising, avoiding, concession and dominating styles "occasionally", and when listed from the highest level to the lowest level, they use the integrating, compromising, avoiding, concession and dominating styles dominance. According to these findings, it can be said that school principals do not use a single conflict management style in conflict situations; they use different styles according to situations or conditions. In addition, it can be said that in case of conflict, school principals generally try to define the problems clearly and to produce solutions, and they use less to try to impose the solutions they believe in by using their power and authority. It is thought that this situation may be the result of the fact that teaching is more autonomous than other professions, that is, teachers are less accountable to the school administration in their work and that they have less direct relations with the administration than other professions. According to the research of Horata (2013), it was seen that school principals use integrating and compromising styles "most often",

avoiding and obliging styles "occasionally" and dominating style "seldom". The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to the lowest level is integrating, compromising, avoiding, obliging, and dominating. The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to the lowest level is similar to the current study. From this perspective, the findings of this study support the findings of the current research. Ilğan (2020) conducted a study in which it was seen that school principals used the integrating style "always", the compromising style "most often", the obliging and avoiding styles "occasionally", and the dominating style "seldom". The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to the lowest level is integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding and dominating. In the research of Şanlı Güneş (2019), it was seen that school principals used integrating and compromising styles "most often", used obliging styles "occasionally", and used avoiding and dominating styles "seldom". The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to the lowest level is integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding, and dominating.

In Demir (2019)'s research, it was seen that school principals used integrating and compromising styles "most often", obliging and avoiding styles "occasionally", and dominating styles "seldom". The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to the lowest level is integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding and dominating. In the results of these researches, it is seen that school principals use the highest level of integrating style, the lowest level of dominating style, and the results are similar to the current research. In the study of Kabakli Çimen and Bağdatlı Sarıboğa (2021), it was seen that school principals used the integrating style "always", the compromising and obliging styles "most often", and the avoiding and dominating styles "occasionally". The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to the lowest level is integrating, compromising, obliging, dominating and avoiding. In the research of Çelik and Tosun (2019), it was seen that school principals use the compromising style "most often", the obliging style "most often", the avoiding and integrating styles "occasionally", and the dominating style "seldom". The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to the lowest level is compromising, obliging, avoiding, integrating, and dominating. In the research of Çobanoğlu and Yüksel (2020), it was seen that school principals used integrating and compromising styles "most often", and avoiding, obliging and dominating styles "occasionally". The order of conflict management styles from the highest level to lowest level is integrating, compromising, avoiding dominating, obliging these studies do not support the results of current research.

It has been observed that the degree range of teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism corresponds to the expression "neutral" on the scale. When we analyse the results of researches of Öztop (2021), Ergen and İnce (2017), it is seen that teachers' perceptions of cynicism are at the level of "neutral". The findings of these studies support the findings of the current research. According to the findings of this research, it can be said that teachers sometimes face with situations that may cause cynicism in school, but there is no cynicism attitude that disturbs teachers. It is also thought that teachers' neutral attitude about organizational cynicism may be due to their inadequate knowledge of the concept of cynicism. In the researches of Gökçe and Levent (2022), Akpolat and Oğuz (2021), Aksoy and Bostancı (2019), Korkut (2019) and Çakıcı (2017), Akın (2015), it was seen that teachers' perceptions of cynicism were at the level of "I disagree". The findings of these studies do not support the findings of the current research.

When the relationship between the conflict management styles used by school principals and teachers' organizational cynicism is examined, it is seen that there is a weak negative significant correlation. When the relationship between the conflict management styles used by school principals and teachers' organizational cynicism levels is examined, it is seen that there is a moderate negative correlation between organizational cynicism and integrating style, a weak negative correlation between conciliatory style and organizational cynicism, and a weak negative correlation between compromising style and organizational cynicism and dominating. There is a moderate positive correlation between style and organizational cynicism and no statistically significant correlation between avoiding style and organizational cynicism. Based on these results, we can say that as the level of using integrating, compromising or obliging styles used by school principals increases, the organizational cynicism levels of teachers will decrease, and as the level of using the dominating style increases, the organizational cynicism levels of teachers will increase. Of the conflict management styles, the one with the highest negative correlation with organizational cynicism is the integrating style. The results are not surprising. Because, as stated by Sarpkaya (2002, p.421), the successful management of the conflict by the managers in the organization helps the organization members of the organization to establish good relations with the organization. Looking at these results, it can be said that in the conflicts that arise in the organization, school principals should make efforts to clearly reveal the problem between the parties, to reach effective solutions for both sides (Karcıoğlu and Alioğulları, 2012, p.223), not to discriminate against the parties (Tink, 2019; Karademir,

2016), to have open communication (Rahim and Psenicka, 2002, p.307) and such use of integrative styles can significantly affect the the reduction of teachers' cynicism levels, that is, their negative feelings, thoughts and behaviors towards school. It is known that the decrease in teachers' levels of organizational cynicism helps them to work effectively and efficiently in school, to strengthen the bond they establish with the school, to increase their level of identification with the school and their adoption of the goals and values of the school (Akar, 2018, p.2101). Therefore, it is seen that it is very important for school principals to use integrating style.

Recommendations

Considering the results of this study, it is seen that it is very important for school principals to use conflict management styles, especially the integrative style. Similarly, as school principals use the dominating style, the increase in teachers' level of organizational cynicism is an expected and important result. It can be said that school principals' trying to apply their personal views and goals by using hierarchical power and superiority of authority and considering their personal views and goals more important than their relations with teachers (Horata, 2013, p.50; Papoutsi, 2020, p.206) increases the organizational cynicism levels of teachers. When we look at all these results, we can say that the conflict management styles of school principals affect the cynicism levels of the teachers and therefore affect many factors such as commitment to school, job performance, and motivation. It should also be noted that school principals must have a clear communication in order to create and maintain a peaceful and healthy organization. For this reason, it is important to provide in-service trainings to school principals so that they can learn about conflict management styles and what consequences the styles they prefer to use may have, and to ensure the continuity of these trainings. It is also thought that teachers do not have enough information about the concept of cynicism. Therefore, it is considered important to provide training on cynicism to teachers to make them learn or to make them be aware that cynicism affects many related factors such as their own work performance, efficiency, motivation, peace, adoption of the aims and values of the school and identification with the school and it is considered important to provide training on cynicism to school principals, who have the greatest responsibility in preventing the emergence of organizational cynicism attitudes. In order for school principals to manage conflict effectively within schools, they need to reduce uncertainty, treat employees fairly, lower stress levels, involve all staff members in decision-making processes, enhance job satisfaction and sense of

responsibility, and support teamwork (Yılmaz & Şencan, 2018). Moreover, to reduce teachers' levels of cynicism, school principals must exhibit characteristics such as openness, empathy, fairness, solidarity, and reliability (Kaptein & Wempe, 2002, as cited in De Bakker, 2007, pp. 131-132). It should also be noted that for school principals to establish and sustain a peaceful and healthy organization, they must possess clear communication skills (Tekkanat, 2019). Studies by Sarpkaya (2002) and Tuğlu (1996) indicate that a lack of communication on the part of school principals negatively impacts conflict management. Since open and honest communication within the organization can eliminate cynicism (Mathur et al., 2013, p. 63), providing training to school principals to improve their communication skills or emphasizing effective communication during interviews for school principal selection could be significant steps in this regard.

Within the scope of this study, a scale applied to 288 public secondary school teachers in Maltepe district of Istanbul. Private schools or different grades of education may be included for this study, and more extensive research may be carried out. In addition, as a result of the research, it is seen that conflict management styles and cynicism are caused or influenced by many factors. Therefore, the subject of this study can be enriched by including different variables.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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The authors hereby declare that they have not used any sources other than those listed in the references. The permission of this research was approved decision number 18 of meeting number 153 of the ethics committee of Istanbul Okan University held on 13.04.2022. Data were collected with the permission of the scale owners.

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