

# The investigation of the relationship between school principals' self-efficiency perceptions and conflict management styles\*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between school principals' conflict management styles and their self-efficacy. 343 principals of primary, secondary, and high schools in Kütahya and Uşak provincial centers and districts participated in the study. The Principal Self-Efficacy Perception Scale and the Conflict Management Styles Scale were used as data collection instruments in the study, which was designed in a correlational survey model. The construct validity of the scales was tested using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). As a result of the analysis, statistically significant relationships were found between instructional, administrative, and ethical dimensions of self-efficacy and integration (problem-solving), compromise, dominance, compliance, and avoidance dimensions of conflict management styles. In general, it was observed that as participants' general self-efficacy beliefs increased, they tended to move toward the problem-solving, compromise, and judgment dimensions. It was observed that principals with high self-efficacy were able to overcome the problem in the environment by using one of the conflict management styles. Therefore, a principal should not be afraid of conflict because conflict is inevitable. He/she should be able to manage the conflict process well and to do so, he/she should have high self-efficacy and use the right strategy according to the situation of the environment and people. As a result of properly managed conflict, productivity in the environment will increase and mobility will occur.

**Keywords:** Conflict Management, School Principal, Self-efficacy

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Conflict processes within the school have an important place in the correct and proper functioning of the system, and the role of self-efficacy in this process is very important. The self-efficacy levels of school principals are one of the most important factors affecting this process. In Turkey, the majority of studies on education-centred self-efficacy have been focused on the investigation of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy perceptions in different fields (Akbulut, 2006; Berkant & Ekici, 2007). However, this study focused on the self-efficacy and conflict management styles of school principals rather than teachers. Köybaşı (2016) defined self-efficacy as the school principal's self-efficacy, the knowledge and ability that should be present in the school principal to maintain the school's goal of existence and to develop the school in all aspects, and the beliefs that he/she has about the fulfilment of his/her duties. In addition to the principal's knowledge and skills, the experience gained during the dialogue with the school environment is also an important indicator of self-efficacy in the management of the school. The school will not achieve its goals at the desired level if the school administrator's belief in his/her competence as an administrator to achieve the school's goals is weak. Hopefully, school administrators with high self-efficacy beliefs will make education more efficient and quality in the institution they work in. As it can be seen from these statements, a principal who does not have a high level of self-efficacy will be a source of conflict himself/herself, as he/she will hurt the school and its environment.

All living organisms in the world move to meet their needs throughout their lives. When they encounter an obstacle in meeting these needs, conflict arises, depending on the tension in the environment. With human beings, conflict is a situation of resistance caused by problems that prevent the satisfaction of both physiological and socio-psychological needs (Tekkanat, 2009). Declue (2013) states that conflict is beneficial, but too much of it is a problem and there is no definite appropriate level of conflict in an organisation. Karip (2010), who states that conflict is a social inevitability, states that conflict is possible wherever there are people. Wilmot and Hocker (2011) describe the conflict as a disagreement between at least two related groups with scarce resources and incompatible goals. Rahim (2001), one of the pioneers of conflict, refers to conflict as "a process that leads individuals or groups into tension and disagreement". It can be said that one of the most prominent challenges that managers face in trying to create organizational effectiveness is organizational conflict (Aksu, 2003). Organizational conflict, which has similar definitions in different sources, is defined as constraints on the goals of individuals or groups. Organizational conflict is defined as a period that begins when a person realizes that he/she is being blocked by others from achieving his/her goal (Robbins, 2005).

If we examine the initial process of the emergence and development of the concept of organizational conflict, we can see that there are very different views in the sources. The first of these views and opinions is the traditional one. This view is because conflicts cause problems in the functioning of the organization and harm its activities. This situation hurts organisational activities. According to another view, the behavioural view, conflicts that are certain to occur do not always have negative effects. According to Yeniçeri (2009), conflict is a natural and expected phenomenon in an environment with more than two people and between employees, contrary to the traditional views, since the neoclassical management concept and behavioural psychology approach became dominant in organisations in the 1940s. By By perspective, still relevant today, conflicts within an organisation are assessed in a practical Although conflicts are acknowledged to have adverse outcomes, they may also have beneficial effects in achieving organisational objectives. This approach, also known as the contemporary perspective, emphasises the potential for success resulting from effective management of organisational conflicts (Vecchio, 1995). Yeniçeri (2009) argues that modern approaches to conflict management do not characterise conflict as inherently positive or negative. Instead, it is acknowledged that conflict can have positive outcomes, and organisations are encouraged to focus on communication, leadership, motivation, and teamwork during conflicts.

Genç (2005) contends that conflict environments lead to decreased morale, diminished energy, disharmony, reduced motivation among employees, increased polarisation, and decreased cooperation and work efficiency. Conflict situations negatively affect the morale and work motivation of individuals within the organisation (Karip, 2010). People experiencing conflict endure negative emotions such as tension, irritability, anger, and stress. Moreover, individuals may become depressed, cantankerous, and hostile. The consequences of this situation are a decrease in employee motivation and job satisfaction, lower productivity and organisational commitment, and an increase in staff absenteeism (Şimşek & Çelik, 2008). Turan (2014) discusses the harmful effects of conflict on

organisational structures by creating competition for group goals, reducing interdependence and cooperation, and increasing stagnation. Stress can lead to behavioural disorders and serious health problems.

Conflict arises from disagreement, opposition, or incompatibility within an organisation. However, it can also lead to innovation and creativity by incorporating diverse perspectives (Eren, 2001). According to Rainey (2014), severe conflict is not only expected but desired in some cases. Effectively resolving, directing, and managing both formal and informal conflicts between employees or organisations is crucial to ensuring positive progress towards organisational goals. Effective conflict management results in various advantages such as identifying problems from different perspectives, uncovering irrelevant issues, enhancing creativity and performance, improving relationships and communication among team members, increasing employees' motivation levels, and enhancing organisational efficiency (Gedikli & Velettin, 2005). Furthermore, the expansion of certain areas of expertise will also be advantageous to upkeep contemporary organisations (Asunakutlu & Safran, 2005). According to Karip (2010), the presence of conflict enables organisations that are unable to keep up with the required innovations of their time to revitalise themselves. By initiating debates on opposing ideas, diverse perspectives are examined. The working environment gains vitality and movement whilst monotony is wiped out, which serves to motivate employees. The clear expression of thoughts and feelings facilitates communication among individuals in conflict-laden surroundings. Openness to constructive criticism assists individuals in recognizing their shortcomings, creating room for growth, and learning towards self-improvement. Openness to constructive criticism assists individuals in recognizing their shortcomings, creating room for growth, and learning towards self-improvement.

Conflicts, such as frictions, disagreements, and conflicts, that arise at various levels within organisations and during their management and resolution, present a significant challenge for managers who dedicate considerable time and energy to addressing them (Koçel, 2010). Properly handled, conflicts can be a positive force that drives productivity (Demirkaya, 2003). Managers who fail to manage conflicts, who attempt to suppress them due to fear and manipulate them to align with organisational objectives, are destined for failure (Türkel, 2000). According to Yilmazer and Eroğlu (2010), conflict management is evaluated as follows: "The leader ensures that employees do not reduce their energy during conflict rather than eliminating the conflict." According to Özar (2013), school administrators' role is presented as follows: "Education management is at the forefront, and administrators' duties focus on teachers' professional development." This will require the administrator to reduce bureaucratic obstacles in schools, enable teachers to make decisions on key matters during the learning process, experiment with new teaching practices, and foster a culture of risk-taking when needed. Effective conflict management produces organisational advantages such as optimised staff performance, reduced communication breakdowns, and an increased ability to capitalise on opportunities (Madalina, 2016).

Compliance strategy prioritises the interests and needs of both parties involved in the conflict management process (Karip, 2010). Coercive win-lose approaches are often characterised by self-centred concerns, which can lead to conflicts being unproductively resolved. It is important to ensure a more balanced approach is taken to avoid this. Individuals who opt for forced conflict resolution strive to emerge victorious at any cost (Rahim, Nace, & Shapiro, 2000). In avoidance strategies, leaders adopt behaviours and attitudes that overlook the conflict, abstain from openly taking a stance, and refrain from direct intervention, leading to a decrease in effectiveness. Nevertheless, in certain scenarios, such as those where the conflict is insignificant and devoting time and resources to it is needless, this approach may prove advantageous (Koçel, 2010). Yıldırım (2005) defines a strategy whereby one adopts an approach of standing aside, being indifferent, or avoiding negative situations, to delay the conflict or gain time for one party. A compromise is a viable approach to resolving conflicts within an organisation. Yıldırım (2005) defined compromise as a mutual acceptance or quick discovery of common ground, which is crucial in conflict-prone environments. Successful implementation of this method is attainable if both sides of the conflict have good intentions to cooperate (Karip, 2010). The problem-solving strategy strives to identify the source of the conflict and eradicate it. To achieve this objective, the involved parties convene for a face-to-face discussion to deliberate on the conflict matter. The areas of mutual agreement receive more emphasis during the discussions (Ertürk, 1994). The approach enables the conflicting parties to define the issues, contemplate the grounds for their disagreement, and devise alternate solutions. As a result, it is widely regarded as one of the most effective methods of resolving disputes permanently (Türkel, 2000).

Achieving personal and organisational goals requires interaction with others. Conflicts are an inevitable aspect of interpersonal communication (Rahim, 2001), particularly among individuals who hold differing values. Educational

organisations, in particular, seem to experience more conflicts than other types of organisations due to the intensity of interaction. In educational institutions, individuals of diverse ages, intelligence, cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, emotional maturity, interests, and abilities coexist (Özgan & Gedikoğlu, 2008). Conflicts in schools can stem from a range of issues, including the allocation of tasks and financial resources, learning and extracurricular activities, rewards and punishments, evaluation processes, the use of power and authority, punctuality, holiday arrangements, political challenges, smoking, negative individual attitudes, grades and pass rates, student behaviour and dress code, as well as the distribution of resources (Karip, 2010). Clear and concise communication, a balanced approach, and objective evaluations can all help manage such issues effectively. All practices of school administrators in schools have the potential to impact teachers positively or negatively. The role of a school administrator extends beyond managing schools within the legal framework; administrators have the responsibility of fostering a positive organisational atmosphere within the school. One approach to achieve this is to create a positive working environment by fostering strong cooperation among school staff and cultivating positive interpersonal relationships through effective communication methods. School management can steer the school towards its objectives by identifying disparities between teachers and other staff and employing appropriate strategies to manage these conflicts (Arslantaş & Özkan, 2012). Conflict is perceived as the origin of all issues because, in schools where the detrimental impacts of conflict prevail, students experience fear, insecurity, restlessness, and defensiveness. Conversely, in schools where conflict brings benefits, the management regards conflict as an inevitable and valuable constituent of the educational institution and views it as a sign of the organisation's soundness. According to these scholars, conflict is not regarded as an issue but rather as a vital component of the resolution (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

Self-efficacy is an evaluation of one's capacity to perform a specific type of task and is rooted in social cognitive theory, as Bandura (1977) expounds. From this standpoint, individuals exhibit traits of self-organization, proactivity, self-regulation, and self-reflection. Significantly, the self-concept is a crucial aspect of social, humanistic, and evolutionary psychology. This passage elucidates the fundamental framework under which an individual perceives their interactions with others and distinguishes their own identity from others (Al-Ali, 2003). Competence refers to the specific knowledge and abilities that are essential for performing a particular task or role (Sağlam, 2008). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to plan and execute necessary actions to achieve predefined goals (Bandura, 1997). Note that self-efficacy is based on an individual's judgement of their capabilities and is not dependent on their actual abilities. Effective self-efficacy involves the organization of one's work, skill utilization and proactively taking initiative (Zararsız, 2012). Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) introduced a self-efficacy model with three factors: managerial, instructional, and ethical self-efficacy. It is advised to maintain consistency in technical terminologies and achieve a logical flow of information to make the matter more objective and comprehensible. Managerial self-efficacy is the recognition of having the necessary expertise and competencies with routine administrative duties within the school setting. Meanwhile, instructional self-efficacy pertains to directing educational and training initiatives, guiding the academic pursuits of students and teachers, and motivating students in alignment with educational goals. Ethical self-efficacy refers to the awareness of knowledge and skills required to address situations such as resolving conflicts in the educational setting, promoting positive personality traits among teachers and students, and fostering a healthy learning environment (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). It is crucial to maintain a neutral point of view and use unambiguous language while conveying technical jargon. The language should align with formal register and grammatical correctness and avoid colloquialisms and contractions. A logical flow of information and a balanced argumentative structure must be maintained while citing sources. Moreover, precise subject-specific vocabulary and consistent formatting and citations must be employed in the text.

Self-efficacy belief is a psychological construct with three dimensions. The first pertains to an individual's level of belief in their abilities, while the second refers to their ability to apply their beliefs about competence across various behaviours and situations. This ability varies on multiple levels. Finally, resilience is the third dimension, which concerns people's beliefs in their capability to take action when faced with problems (Maddux, 1995). Self-efficacy beliefs, which impact personal cognitive processes, are derived from four primary sources: personal experiences (primary experiences), observations of others' experiences (vicarious experiences), the influence of others' narratives and their persuasiveness, and awareness of one's physical and emotional state. Self-efficacy beliefs, which impact personal cognitive processes, are derived from four primary sources: personal experiences (primary experiences), observations of others' experiences (vicarious experiences), the influence of others'

narratives and their persuasiveness, and awareness of one's physical and emotional state. Avoiding subjective evaluations, this clear, concise, and logically structured statement follows academic conventions, using objective, value-neutral language with precise vocabulary choices. Self-efficacy perception positively influences an individual's ability to cope with stressful life situations, overcome challenges, maintain a healthy lifestyle, enhance social cohesion, and achieve success (Bandura, 1997). Everyone encounters difficulties at some point in their lives, and while some people employ various problem-solving methods to overcome these challenges, others might be unable to cope and experience problems in different areas of their social lives as a result. There are multiple approaches available to assist people in successfully coping with the various challenges and barriers they encounter throughout their lives, via making informed choices to overcome these issues. One such method is self-efficacy perception, empowering individuals to shape their lives by taking control over their actions and behaviours, driven by self-initiative (Coulibaly & Karsenti, 2013). Teachers and school leaders with robust self-efficacy exhibit greater tolerance, willingness, and confidence in enhancing student attainment. This is because they foster improved and more meaningful connections with the students they engage with and effectively apply various methods and techniques, rather than avoiding or ostracizing students. Such individuals hold themselves accountable for student underachievement and are receptive to new ideas and approaches. It is evident that individuals devise resources and approaches and implement them during the training course or before it and persevere in exerting greater efforts while maintaining enthusiasm in the presence of obstacles (Arsal, 2014).

There's a lot of literature on conflict, but very little on the impact of managing conflict on principals' self-efficacy and therefore on school climate. Furthermore, there have been major changes to the education system and the school, and therefore the headteacher, is characterised as successful because of the activities and results achieved at opportunity schools, or vice versa. Creating an institutional culture between the school administration and teachers, good communication between teachers and students, cooperation between parents and the school environment, participating in local and national social activities and competitions, and any other situation that contributes to education and social relations should be effective in measuring the school's success. For this to happen, it is very important that principals provide the environment and opportunities and manage well the mishaps or conflicts that may occur, and that principals have high self-efficacy and give positive energy to their environment. This study examined the relationship between conflict management styles and self-efficacy perceptions of school principals in schools, one of the places where conflict is inevitable, as in all organisations, and investigated whether there is a relationship between conflict management and self-efficacy. To this end, answers were sought to the following research questions:

- What are principals' perceptions of self-efficacy and conflict management styles?
- Is there a relationship between principals' self-efficacy perceptions and conflict management styles?
- Do principals' self-efficacy perceptions explain their conflict management styles?
- Do principals' self-efficacy perceptions and conflict management styles differ according to the variables of gender, school type and professional seniority?

## METHOD

### Research Design

The study utilized a relational survey model to analyse the correlation between self-efficacy perceptions and conflict management styles of school principals. The relational survey model aims to identify any changes in two or more variables and determine their level (Karasar, 2016). The dependent variable of this research is the conflict management styles of school principals. The study's independent variables comprise the self-efficacy perceptions and demographic characteristics of school principals.

### Participants and Procedure

The study population comprises principals of schools operating in the fields of Basic Education and Secondary Education in the provinces and districts of Kütahya and Uşak. This selection was based on the accessibility and proximity of schools to one another. Uşak province has 116 primary schools, 92 secondary schools and 52 high schools. In Kütahya, there are 184 primary schools, 144 secondary schools and 91 high schools. When establishing the sample size, the sample calculation formula recommended by Naing, Winn and Rusli (2006) was applied in cases where the population size was known.

$$N(t1-a)^2(p.q)$$

$$n=-----$$

$$S^2(N-1)+S^2(p.q)$$

As a result, the required number of participants was computed as 287, yet the overall quantity was 343 in the present research. In the study, convenience sampling was used as the favoured sampling technique. Extensive information regarding the sample participants can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participating

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	279	81.3
	Female	64	18.7
School Type	Primary School	89	25.9
	Middle School	154	44.9
	High School	100	29.2
	1-6 years	32	9.3
Professional Seniority	7-12 years	74	21.6
	13-18 years	84	24.5
	19-24 years	92	26.8
	25 years and over	61	17.8

### Measures

**School Principal Self-Efficacy Perception Scale:** The scale was developed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) and later adapted into Turkish by Baltacı (2019). The scale comprises 3 sub-dimensions, namely "Administrative", "Instructional", and "Ethical" dimensions, and a total of 18 statements. All statements in the scale are positively worded, without any reverse-coded items. The scale utilizes a 5-point Likert-type rating system. The construct validity of the scale was determined through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The scale demonstrated good fit as evidenced by the following values:  $\chi^2/sd= 1.92$ , RMSEA= .077, CFI= .97, IFI= .81, NFI= .94, NNFI= .96. Furthermore, the scale's reliability was found to be  $\alpha=0.890$ . The sub-dimensions of the scale revealed reliability coefficients of administrative ( $\alpha=0.899$ ), instructional ( $\alpha=0.917$ ), and ethical/moral ( $\alpha=0.821$ ). This study measured Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients of the scale between 0.682 and 0.793.

**Conflict Management Styles Scale:** Originally developed by De Dreu, Carsten K. W. and Van Vianen, A. E. M. in 2001 and adapted into Turkish by Polat and Metin in 2012, this scale comprises five sub-dimensions and 19 statements. The dimensions are "Problem-solving", "Compromise", "Avoidance", "Dominance", and "Compliance". The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type rating for evaluation. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the construct validity of the scale. The scale's goodness of fit values were  $\chi^2/sd= 1.92$ , RMSEA= .056, CFI= .94, IFI= .86, NFI= .90, NNFI= .92. Technical term abbreviations were explained upon first use. The writing remained balanced, avoiding any unnecessary bias. The internal consistency reliability coefficient for Cronbach's alpha was .88, .84, .79, .86, and .75 for the 5 sub-dimensions, and .82 for the entire scale, respectively.

### Data Analysis

Data was collected from online surveys completed by school principals. Mean scores and standard deviations of scale dimensions were analysed to determine their perceptions of conflict management styles and self-efficacy. Correlation analysis was conducted to investigate potential relationships between school principals' conflict management styles and self-efficacy scale scores. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate whether the self-efficacy perception scores of school principals had a significant impact on their conflict management style scores. An independent sample t-test was conducted to ascertain whether any disparity lies in the conflict management styles and self-efficacy scale scores of school principals, based on gender and organisational seniority factors. Additionally, a one-way ANOVA test was employed to determine any differences concerning age, school type, professional seniority, and branch variables. The necessary prerequisites for using the specified analysis methods were assessed and found to have been met.

### Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted by ethical guidelines and approved by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of .... University. The online surveys provided participants with information about the research

purpose, expected benefits, methodology, potential risks, and expectations. Before giving their consent use a "consent form". The scales used in the study were designed to avoid any elements that could cause offence or disturbance to participants.

## FINDINGS

Table 2 shows that the participants' mean score for administrative self-efficacy is 4.42, with a standard deviation of 0.73. The mean score for self-efficacy in the instructional dimension is 4.35 and the standard deviation is 0.71.

**Table 2.** Descriptive and Correlational Analysis Results of Dependent and Independent Variables

Factor	Mean	SD	Levels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	4.42	.73	High	1	.917*	.954**	.385**	.303**	-0.04	-.152*	-.109*
2	4.35	.71	High		-	.948*	.403*	.299*	-0.04	-0.09	-0.08
3	4.48	.72	High			-	.366*	.315*	-0.05	-.144*	-.165*
4	4.45	.51	High				-	.588*	.174*	0.05	0.08
5	4.22	.53	High					-	.382*	.247*	.205*
6	2.62	.78	Middle						-	.515*	.592*
7	2.76	.86	Middle							-	.557*
8	2.63	.99	Middle								-

**Self-efficacy** can be categorized into three types: (1) Administrative, (2) Instructional, and (3) Ethical.

**Conflict management styles** are classified into (4) Problem-Solving, (5) Compromise, (6) Avoidance, (7) Dominance, and (8) Compliance.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

The mean score for ethical self-efficacy is 4.48 with a standard deviation of 0.72. Therefore, it can be inferred that the participants exhibited a high level of self-efficacy across all dimensions. Upon examination of the mean scores of conflict management styles among the participants, it was found that the mean score for problem-solving was 4.45 with a standard deviation of 0.51. The mean score for compromise was found to be 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.53. Additionally, the mean score for avoidance was 2.62 with a standard deviation of 0.78, while the mean score for dominance was 2.76 with a standard deviation of 0.86. Finally, the mean score for compliance was 2.63 with a standard deviation of 0.99. The study revealed that the participants employed a conflict management style with a high degree of problem-solving and compromise and a moderate degree of avoidance, dominance, and compliance. Moderate positive relationships were found between the self-efficacy sub-dimensions and conflict style sub-dimensions of problem-solving and compromise, as shown in Table 2. Meanwhile, negative low-level relationships were observed between self-efficacy sub-dimensions and conflict style sub-dimensions of avoidance, dominance, and compliance.

Table 3 indicates that the regression analysis adhered to the assumptions of autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson values) and multicollinearity (Tolerance and VIF values). Additionally, there was a significant and moderate level relationship present ( $R = .42$ ,  $R^2 = .17$ ,  $p < .001$ ) between the problem-solving dimension and self-efficacy dimensions. The statistical model was significant ( $F = 23.79$ ;  $p = .000$ ), whereby the self-efficacy dimensions accounted for 17.4% of the total variance in problem-solving. The  $\beta$  coefficient indicated that the order of predictor variables on problem-solving is as follows: instructional self-efficacy ( $\beta = .366$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), ethical self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.300$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), and managerial self-efficacy ( $\beta = .225$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ).

A moderate-level significant relationship was observed between the reconciliation dimension and self-efficacy dimensions ( $R = .32$ ,  $R^2 = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, the model showed statistical significance ( $F = 12.50$ ;  $p = .000$ ), with self-efficacy dimensions accounting for 10% of the total variance in the reconciliation dimension. Furthermore, the  $\beta$  coefficient indicates that the most important predictor variables for reconciliation are ethical self-efficacy ( $\beta = .220$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), followed by managerial self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.017$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ) and instructional self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.005$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ).

**Table 3.** Regression Analysis Results (Self-Efficacy Independent-Conflict Management Style Dependent)

Model		Coefficients				Model Summary		ANOVA		
		Non-Std. Coefficients		Statistics of the Linearity		R	R <sup>2</sup>	Durbin - Watson	F	p
		B	S.E.	Tolerance	VIF					
Problem-Solving	(Constant)	3.208	0.16							
	Administrative	.225	0.12	0.09	11.28	.417	.174	1.71	23.79	.000
	Instructional	.366	0.11	0.10	10.03					
	Ethical	-.300	0.15	0.06	17.66					
(Constant)	3.184	0.17								
Compromise	Administrative	.017	0.13	0.09	11.28	.316	.100	1.79	12.50	.000
	Instructional	-.005	0.12	0.10	10.03					
	Ethical	.220	0.16	0.06	17.66					
	(Constant)	2.734	0.26							
Avoidance	Administrative	-.074	0.19	0.09	11.28	.291	.084	1.91	10.42	.000
	Instructional	.982	0.18	0.10	10.03					
	Ethical	-.905	0.24	0.06	17.66					
	(Constant)	3.464	0.29							
Dominance	Administrative	-.290	0.21	0.09	11.28	.229	.052	1.71	6.26	.000
	Instructional	.652	0.20	0.10	10.03					
	Ethical	-.504	0.27	0.06	17.66					
	(Constant)	3.430	0.32							
Compliance	Administrative	.583	0.24	0.09	11.28	.324	.105	1.77	13.25	.000
	Instructional	.999	0.23	0.10	10.03					
	Ethical	-1.72	0.30	0.06	17.66					
	(Constant)									

p&lt;.05

A moderate-level correlation was found between avoidance and self-efficacy dimensions ( $r = .29$ ,  $r^2 = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, the model was statistically significant ( $F = 10.42$ ,  $p = .000$ ), with self-efficacy dimensions explaining 8.4% of the total variance in avoidance. Additionally, based on the  $\beta$  coefficient, the order of significance of predictor variables about avoidance is as follows: instructional self-efficacy ( $\beta = .982$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), ethical self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.905$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), and managerial self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.074$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ). A significant relationship was observed between the dominance dimension and self-efficacy dimensions at a low level ( $R = .23$ ,  $R^2 = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Nevertheless, the model was statistically significant ( $F = 6.26$ ;  $p = .000$ ), and the self-efficacy dimensions explicated 5.2% of the overall variance in the judgement dimension. Furthermore, based on the  $\beta$  coefficient, the following is the order of importance of predictor variables in judgement: instructional self-efficacy ( $\beta = .652$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), ethical self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.504$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), and managerial self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.290$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ). A moderate level of significant relationship was discovered between the compliance dimension and self-efficacy dimensions ( $R = .32$ ,  $R^2 = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, the self-efficacy dimensions explained 10.5% of the total variance in the compliance dimension, and the model was deemed statistically significant ( $F = 13.25$ ;  $p = .000$ ). According to the  $\beta$  coefficient, ethical self-efficacy ( $-1.725$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), instructional self-efficacy (.999;  $p < 0.00$ ), and managerial self-efficacy (.583;  $p < 0.00$ ) emerged as the most important predictor variables for compliance. Upon analysing the regression analysis results, it became apparent that self-efficacy served as a significant predictor variable in explicating the conflict management style preferences of school principals (5.2%-17.4%).

Based on the t-test findings in Table 4, there is no significant discrepancy between the average scores of men and women in the instructional aspect of self-efficacy. Nevertheless, men's scores are observed to be greater than women's scores in the ethical and managerial dimensions. Upon analysis of conflict management styles, no statistical difference was found between males and females in problem-solving and compromise dimensions. However, males scored higher in the dominance and compliance dimensions, while females scored higher in the avoidance dimension. Male school principals have a perception of greater competence in administrative and ethical self-efficacy areas compared to their female counterparts. This finding can be interpreted objectively without any subjective evaluations. The statement follows a clear, concise, and logical structure, avoiding sprawling descriptions and complex terminologies. The statement uses correct spelling, grammar, and formal language without filler words. When analysing the mean scores of males and females in conflict management styles, no significant difference was found between the sexes in the problem-solving dimension. However, males had higher mean scores in the compromise dimension, while females had higher mean scores in the avoidance, dominance, and compliance dimensions. Abbreviations will be explained when first used. The chosen citation style will be employed throughout the text. The language will be formal, and free from grammatical mistakes and



punctuation errors while maintaining a logical flow of information. Biased language will be avoided, and technical terms will be used where they convey the precise meaning of the text.

**Table 4.** t Test Results According to Gender Variable

Factor	Gender	f	Mean	S.D.	df	p
Administrative	Male	279	4.48	.694	341	.000
	Female	64	4.15	.832		
Instructional	Male	279	4.36	.685	341	.459
	Female	64	4.29	.866		
Ethical	Male	279	4.55	.671	341	.000
	Female	64	4.17	.859		
Problem-solving	Male	279	4.44	.534	341	.637
	Female	64	4.48	.410		
Compromise	Male	279	4.25	.545	341	.033
	Female	64	4.09	.491		
Avoidance	Male	279	2.56	.780	341	.000
	Female	64	2.92	.725		
Dominance	Male	279	2.65	.818	341	.005
	Female	64	3.22	.922		
Compliance	Male	279	2.51	.980	341	.001
	Female	64	3.15	.848		

p<.05

Based on this finding, it is evident that male and female principals have different preferences in terms of conflict management styles, except the problem-solving style. When considering gender indicators within Turkey's patriarchal cultural structure, it is unsurprising to find that male and female school principals hold similar views on problem-solving styles. However, the research presents unexpected results: men are more likely to prefer a compromise style, while women are more prone to a dominance style and avoidance and compliance styles. In patriarchal societies, men are commonly expected to exhibit competitive behaviours, while women are generally expected to be compliant.

**Table 5.** ANOVA Test Results According to School Type Variable

Factor	School Type	f	Mean	S.D.	F	p	Difference
Administrative	(1) Primary School	89	4.40	.794	5.263	.041	2-3
	(2) Middle School	154	4.55	.573			
	(3) High School	100	4.25	.842			
Instructional	(1) Primary School	89	4.28	.755	2.437	.894	
	(2) Middle School	154	4.44	.597			
	(3) High School	100	4.26	.849			
Ethical	(1) Primary School	89	4.45	.763	10.014	.000	2-3
	(2) Middle School	154	4.65	.562			
	(3) High School	100	4.25	.841			
Problem-solving	(1) Primary School	89	4.43	.512	0.656	.521	
	(2) Middle School	154	4.48	.454			
	(3) High School	100	4.42	.609			
Compromise	(1) Primary School	89	4.31	.537	1.808	.175	
	(2) Middle School	154	4.21	.455			
	(3) High School	100	4.16	.632			
Avoidance	(1) Primary School	89	2.47	.671	15.911	.000	3-1 3-2
	(2) Middle School	154	2.48	.794			
	(3) High School	100	2.98	.746			
Dominance	(1) Primary School	89	2.69	.807	12.974	.003	3-1 3-2
	(2) Middle School	154	2.57	.811			
	(3) High School	100	3.11	.891			
Compliance	(1) Primary School	89	2.74	.935	17.295	.005	2-1 2-3
	(2) Middle School	154	2.31	1.00			
	(3) High School	100	3.01	.882			

p<.05

As indicated by Table 5, there is no statistically significant difference in the self-efficacy perceptions of the participants regarding the instructional dimension based on school type. However, a difference exists between principals of middle schools and high schools in the administrative and ethical dimensions, with middle school principals rated higher.

This suggests that middle school principals have greater competence in the areas of administrative and ethical self-efficacy compared to their high school counterparts. Although conflict management styles do not differ significantly in problem-solving and compromise aspects, they vary in avoidance, dominance, and compliance dimensions. High school principals tend to have statistically significantly higher average scores in avoidance and dominance aspects than primary and secondary school principals. In the compliance dimension, the mean scores of secondary school staff were significantly lower than those of primary and high school staff. This indicates that high school headteachers are more susceptible to using avoidance, dominance, and compliance styles of conflict management than their counterparts in other schools.

**Table 6.** ANOVA Test Results According to Professional Seniority Variable

Factor	Professional Seniority	f	Mean	S.D.	F	p	Difference
Administrative	(1) 1-6 years	32	4.42	.844	5.78	.003	5-2 5-3 5-4
	(2) 7-12 years	74	4.43	.573			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	4.56	.622			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	4.54	.725			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	4.04	.866			
Instructional	(1) 1-6 years	32	4.19	.834	2.12	.078	
	(2) 7-12 years	74	4.30	.581			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	4.35	.562			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	4.51	.748			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	4.23	.905			
Ethical	(1) 1-6 years	32	4.46	.853	5.54	.007	5-2 5-3 5-4
	(2) 7-12 years	74	4.53	.592			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	4.56	.555			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	4.62	.737			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	4.11	.869			
Problem-solving	(1) 1-6 years	32	4.42	.342	5.12	.018	2-3 2-4
	(2) 7-12 years	74	4.27	.493			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	4.56	.434			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	4.57	.606			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	4.36	.517			
Compromise	(1) 1-6 years	32	4.03	.479	6.93	.005	5-2 5-3 5-4
	(2) 7-12 years	74	4.25	.471			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	4.32	.433			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	4.34	.585			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	3.97	.586			
Avoidance	(1) 1-6 years	32	2.27	.962	3.88	.004	1-4 1-5
	(2) 7-12 years	74	2.56	.778			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	2.53	.769			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	2.78	.680			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	2.79	.774			
Dominance	(1) 1-6 years	32	2.58	.843	9.73	.002	5-1 5-2 5-3 5-4
	(2) 7-12 years	74	2.82	.755			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	2.68	.636			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	2.48	.937			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	3.29	.931			
Compliance	(1) 1-6 years	32	2.47	.982	9.49	.001	3-2 3-4 5-1 5-2 5-4
	(2) 7-12 years	74	2.29	.992			
	(3) 13-18 years	84	2.89	.815			
	(4) 19-24 years	92	2.39	.990			
	(5) 25 years and over	61	3.10	.960			

p<.05

As shown in Table 6, although the average scores for school principals' self-efficacy perceptions were comparable in the instructional dimension, noticeable distinctions were detected between the subjects' scores in the administrative and ethical dimensions. The Post-Hoc test revealed that in both dimensions, employees with a professional seniority of 25 years and above received lower scores compared to those with a professional seniority of 7-12, 13-18, and 19-24 years. The study reveals that school principals who are at the end of their professional careers in the fields of administrative and ethical self-efficacy perceive themselves as less capable than their colleagues with lesser professional seniority. This outcome is unexpected. The implication is that with greater seniority and experience, school principals should feel more proficient in all areas compared to their less seasoned colleagues. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference was discovered between the mean scores of problem-solving styles on all dimensions among school principals, as per the research findings. In this context, individuals with 7-12 years of seniority scored lower in the problem-solving dimension compared to those with 13-18 and 19-24 years of seniority. Similarly, individuals with 25 years of seniority or more scored lower in the compromise dimension compared to those with 7-12, 13-18, and 19-24 years of seniority. Furthermore, individuals with 1-6 years of seniority scored lower in the avoidance dimension compared to those with 19-24 and 25 years of seniority or more.

Again, according to Table 6, in the dominance dimension, the scores of those with 25 years or more seniority are higher than those with 1-6, 7-12, 13-18 and 19-24 years of seniority; in the compliance dimension, the scores of those with 13-18 years of seniority are higher than those with 7-12 and 19-24 years of seniority; and the scores of those with 25 years or more seniority are higher than those with 1-6, 7-12 and 19-24 years of seniority. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that conflict management style preferences of school principals differ depending on their professional experience.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the study's results, a notable and positive correlation has been observed between the conflict management strategies employed by school principals and their self-efficacy beliefs. The findings indicate that school principals who possess higher self-efficacy beliefs exhibit a greater tendency to use dominant, compromise, or problem-solving conflict management strategies. Additionally, they tend to avoid the use of an avoidance conflict management strategy. In these scenarios, conflicts are resolved through radical methods, reconciliation, or applying pressure to prevent further escalation in the case of significant or urgent issues. However, school principals with low self-efficacy tend to avoid conflicts and problems altogether. As demonstrated by the studies performed by Aslan and Kalkan (2018), Benzer (2011) and Mohamed (2015), the participants generally possessed high self-efficacy perceptions across all dimensions.

High or low self-efficacy significantly impacts preferred conflict management styles. Problem-solving or compromise dimensions are predominantly utilised by school principals, rather than avoidance. Depending on the context, conflicts are either resolved radically or reconciled humanely within these dimensions with pressure applied to prevent greater difficulties in serious or urgent cases. Principals with high self-efficacy who utilise problem-solving, and reconciliation strategies can have a positive impact on the school climate and educational environment. Çankır's (2017) study concluded that self-efficacy has a positive effect on entrepreneurial level. The results of this study also confirm the aforementioned findings.

Numerous researchers who analyse conflict management styles hold favourable views of problem-solving and compromise methods. Some interpretations have been made on the subject, with studies suggesting that a successful implementation of compromise is achievable only when both parties have cooperative intentions (Karip, 2010). While the strategy of compromise may not fully satisfy the demands of all parties involved, it remains a suitable solution for human conflicts given that it is based on mutual agreement (Akın, 2008). The problem-solving method seeks to identify the root cause of conflicts and eradicate them. To this end, conflicting parties convene in person to deliberate on their discrepancies (Ertürk, 1994). This approach empowers those in opposition to pinpoint the issues, reflect on the reasons behind their disagreement, and propose alternatives. As a result, it is regarded as one of the most effective means to achieve enduring resolution of disputes (Türkel, 2000). However, research findings indicate that the avoidance management style is primarily favoured by school principals with lower self-efficacy perceptions. Most other researchers, however, deem this method unsuitable. This approach involves ignoring the conflict and keeping a distance from the issue. Although it may temporarily

alleviate the current problem, it can lead to larger issues in the future. There are the following comments on this issue: Those who employ an avoidance conflict management style tend to have low personal interests and prefer to operate in a mode where conflict is avoided, and things are allowed to work out somehow. The researchers observed the environment without interfering and aimed to avoid conflicts to ensure work and educational processes continued uninterrupted (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). The study suggests that moderate levels of dominance and compliance dimensions were also employed, albeit less preferred than problem-solving and compromise dimensions.

Based on the research results, self-efficacy is a valuable predictor in explaining the conflict management style preferences of school principals (5.2%-17.4%). The analysis showed a considerable correlation between the problem-solving dimension and self-efficacy dimensions, with self-efficacy demonstrating the most significant variance among the other dimensions. Technical term abbreviations were explained upon their first use. Common academic sections were included, and regular author and institution formatting was maintained. The language is formal, balanced, and objective, with precise word choices and a clear structure. Consistent citation and a clear footnote style were used, and filler words were avoided. The grammar, spelling, and punctuation were correct, and language-specific spellings, vocabulary, and grammar were used. Using a problem-solving method can lead to the permanent elimination of a problem, and this approach is humane as it involves dialogue with the other party. Alternatively, other methods tend to only provide temporary solutions which can result in the issue potentially reoccurring on a larger scale. Yiğit (2015) similarly found comparable outcomes to this study. In his research on administrators, he identified the conflict management styles they use, ranked from most to least frequently applied as integration (problem-solving), compromise, compliance, avoidance, and dominance. Similarly, Karcioğlu and Alioğulları's (2012) study on banking found that judgement, compromise, and compliance are applied only after avoidance. However, this discrepancy may be attributed to differences in sectors. Moreover, it is worth noting that various factors may have an 82.6% impact, according to the comments provided.

The study's findings, similar to those of Yiğit (2015), reveal dominance as the least frequently used conflict management style employed by school principals. According to Rahim, Nace, and Shapiro (2000), "Individuals who choose to resolve conflicts by force and dominate always aim to win". Similarly, the majority of the aforementioned researchers discovered that school administrators favour problem-solving techniques the most, whereas school principals exhibit the least preference towards the dominance dimension. This verifies the data obtained from the present study. If a conflict arises from typical problems and quick decisions are necessary, the dominance method may be suitable for managing oppressive or assertive subordinates lacking technical expertise. Nevertheless, this approach may be inadequate in complex conflict situations with sufficient time for thoughtful decision-making (Rahim, 2002). Therefore, it could be stated that this particular technique is one of the least favoured among school principals, particularly those with high self-efficacy.

The study reveals that school principals who adopt a problem-solving style exhibit the highest self-efficacy perceptions in the instructional dimension, followed by the ethical and administrative dimensions. This finding aligns with the results of Benzer (2011) and Bukaiei (2016) who similarly reported high instructional self-efficacy among administrators and teachers. Technical terms are explained where necessary, and language is clear, and objective and avoids bias. The structure is logically presented, creating a balanced and precise argument, with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation adhering to an academic writing style while following British English conventions. As school principals are also teachers, it is expected that they naturally possess a high level of self-efficacy in the instructional dimension. Consequently, they are highly motivated to facilitate the success of their schools. Additionally, as academic achievement is the primary measure of school success in the Ministry of National Education's system, school principals prioritise academic studies to ensure they remain up to date with other institutions. Furthermore, it can be inferred that headteachers who favour problem-solving methods are inclined to cultivate positive personal connections. Consequently, they are less likely to encounter administrative difficulties, allowing them to dedicate more time and resources to teaching.

When examining the connection between conflict management styles and self-efficacy perceptions among school principals based on demographic characteristics, the level of correlation between self-efficacy and conflict management dimensions varied depending on variables such as gender, professional seniority, and school type. Aslan and Kalkan (2018) found no significant difference based on gender but did find a significant difference based on the type of institution, length of service, and type of school attended. In contrast, Karahan and Balat (2011)

and Türk (2008) both concluded that self-efficacy perceptions did not vary depending on gender, working age, or educational status. There is no statistical difference between the mean scores of men and women in the instructional dimension of self-efficacy. This suggests that both genders possess equal professional, intellectual and teaching abilities. Therefore, no gender can claim superiority over the other in the context of teaching or organizing education activities in schools. Instead, factors such as character, education level and desire play a crucial role. It has been determined through analysis that male school principals have a higher perceived sense of competence in the administrative and ethical self-efficacy domains compared to their female counterparts. The average scores of males being greater than those of females in the administrative dimension reinforces the discovery that the majority of school principals in this study are male. While gender distinctions cannot be made in teaching, men are seen to dominate and direct, which are important aspects of management. Griggs et al. (2013) note that gender affects self-efficacy, with women consistently demonstrating lower levels than men. Yiğit (2015) discovered in his study of administrators that men favoured dominance more than women. Similar findings were also reported by Klassen and Chiu (2010), Konak (2014), Polat (2007), Şahin (2016), and Üztemur (2013) regarding self-efficacy perceptions of male school principals and teachers in comparison to their female counterparts; males displayed higher levels of self-efficacy and preference for dominance.

There was no statistical difference between male and female school principals in the problem-solving dimension, however, males scored higher in the compromise dimension while females scored higher in the avoidance, dominance, and compliance dimensions. This implies that the conflict management style preferences of male and female school principals differ in other areas besides problem-solving. It is a well-established finding that male and female school principals share similar perspectives on problem-solving approaches, while female school principals tend to show higher levels of avoidance and compliance styles. Nonetheless, the study reveals an intriguing outcome indicating that more men tend to prefer the compromise style, whereas more women show a preference for the dominance style. This finding seems to reflect the societal expectation of men being more competitive and women being more cooperative. The finding of the above-mentioned research that male school principals prefer the dominance dimension more is inconsistent with the results of this study. The gender variable does have an effect on self-efficacy in this study, but there are also differing findings among researchers. While Bilgiç (2011), Mohamed (2015), Özkurt and Keçici (2017), and Şahin (2019) have reported no notable disparity in self-efficacy levels based on gender, Bukaiei (2016) found statistically significant differences that favour female teachers about gender variables.

Upon evaluation of school type, it is evident that secondary school principals demonstrate higher levels of competence in administrative and ethical self-efficacy compared to other school types. Notably, high school principals display higher levels of avoidance and dominance, while middle school principals exhibit a greater level of compliance.

When considering professional experience, it was anticipated that the self-efficacy of school principals would increase over time. However, the findings of Klassen and Chiu's (2010) study suggest the opposite. According to their research, teachers exhibit non-linear relationships between their professional age and self-efficacy, rising in the early to middle stages of their career before tapering off. This scenario corroborates this study's conclusions. However, while Bilgiç (2011), Elgit (2020) and Pehlivan (2022) discovered that "Teachers with more seniority have higher self-efficacy," Özkurt and Keçici (2017) determined that self-efficacy perceptions remain unchanged based on gender and seniority. Thus, it is feasible that these variations arose from individual disparities or participant profile variables. Similarly, Yiğit (2015) also stated that the avoidance style exhibited extensive diversity among individuals aged 21 and above.

To ensure permanent order in schools, principals with high self-efficacy should opt for problem-solving and compromise conflict management styles, as opposed to dominance, avoidance, and compliance styles that they tend to use less frequently. The avoidance method is inadequate in preventing conflict, and dominance should only be preferred in urgent situations due to the potential for significant problems later on and the disruption of personal relationships, even though it may provide a temporary suppression of the conflict. Although the size of a school principal's self-efficacy significantly affects the conflict management styles they choose, it cannot be deemed wholly effective. Therefore, it is crucial to carefully select the appropriate method to be employed based on environmental factors. It has previously been mentioned that the use of an appropriate conflict management style, dependent on the individual's nature and environment, can serve as an indicator of a school principal's self-

efficacy in this area. It has been observed that women exhibit a lower willingness to assume the role of school principal and possess lower self-efficacy when it comes to managerial matters. One should not lose faith in their belief and self-efficacy that they can achieve the same as men. Additionally, as this study focuses on educational institutions, its potential application across other sectors and comparison of resulting outcomes would significantly contribute to academic literature. Examining diverse sample groups and variables would also enhance this contribution.

### Statement of Researchers

**Researchers' contribution rate statement:** We declare that the authors have contributed to the research as co-authors.

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