

Conflict management in organizations: A systematic review

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to systematically review the literature on conflict management in organizations in Turkey between 2005 and 2025, a period chosen because the full texts of one study from 2003 and another from 2004 were unavailable, resulting in their exclusion from the analysis. This study is a systematic review. The document analysis method was used as the data collection technique. Among the purposive sampling methods, the criterion sampling technique was preferred. In line with the aim of the research, articles published in Turkey between 2005 and 2025 and included in the TR Index database on the topic of conflict management in organizations were systematically examined. The population of the study consists of a total of 65 articles found in TR Index. The study reached the full count of these articles. The findings of the study indicate that the number of studies on conflict management in organizations have increased over the years, with the highest number of publications occurring particularly in and after 2020. The most frequently addressed topics in the examined articles were "conflict and its management" and "school climate." The most cited article received 25 citations. Quantitative studies were more numerous than qualitative and mixed-method studies. Based on these findings, it is expected that the topic of conflict management in organizations will continue to maintain its importance in the future.

Keywords: Organizational conflict, education, school management, systematic review

Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life. Whether it leads to growth or disruption depends on how it is managed. When approached constructively, conflict can strengthen relationships and improve problem-solving capacity (Raines, 2013). In every organization, conflict is inevitable; however, adopting the right approach significantly increases the likelihood of resolving disputes before they escalate out of control (Hasson, 2006). Conflict can be viewed not only as a destructive and harmful issue requiring resolution, but also as a constructive, challenging, and dynamic process that serves as an opportunity to initiate change (Steward, 1998).

Conflict management refers to addressing disputes that arise from differences in goals, interests, or competition for resources. When left unmanaged, conflicts can cause stress, inefficiency, and relationship breakdowns. However, effective conflict management transforms these challenges into opportunities for cooperation and trust (Luecke & Patterson, 2008). It relies on three core principles: efficiency, equity, and voice. Efficiency focuses on reducing harm to productivity and ensuring the effective use of resources. Equity ensures fair, evidence-based outcomes and appropriate responses to rights violations. Voice emphasizes inclusive participation, allowing all parties to express their perspectives and contribute to the resolution process. Together, these principles support sustainable and just outcomes (Budd & Colvin, 2014). In practice, conflict management focuses on developing long-term, mutually acceptable solutions rather than suppressing differences. It encourages a shift from individual perspectives toward shared understanding. Through open dialogue and constructive interaction, it strengthens relationships, improves communication, and supports better conflict resolution

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in the future. Success depends on creative options and sustainable agreements that satisfy all parties (Sıgri, 2018).

The initial conceptualization of interpersonal conflict management in organizational settings was proposed by Follett (1926/1940). She argued that conflicts could be managed through domination, compromise, and integration, while also suggesting that secondary strategies such as avoidance and suppression might be employed. Building on this foundation, Blake and Mouton (1964) categorized conflict management styles into five types; forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving based on the degree of concern managers show for production and for people. Later, Thomas (1976) expanded this model by redefining conflict management along two behavioral dimensions: the tendency to engage in cooperativeness and assertiveness. Subsequently, Rahim and Bonoma (1979), and later Rahim (1983a), developed a refined framework that evaluates conflict management styles in terms of concern for self and concern for others. This dual-dimensional model reflects the motivational orientations of individuals during conflict interactions. Further validation of these two dimensions was provided by empirical studies conducted by Ruble and Thomas (1976) and Van de Vliert and Kabanoff (1990). Based on the intersection of these two core dimensions, Rahim and Bonoma (1979) proposed five distinct conflict management styles, a model that has since become foundational within contemporary conflict management theory.

Integrating style is a collaborative conflict management approach that places high importance on both oneself and others (Rahim, 2023). According to Follett (1926/1940), the fundamental rule of this style is to explicitly reveal the conflict and establish transparent communication between the parties. Gray (1989) describes it as a collaborative process in which the parties attempt to generate solutions that transcend their limited viewpoints by exploring different perspectives. According to Prein (1976), integration consists of two essential elements: confrontation to understand the causes of the conflict and problem solving to develop solutions that provide mutual satisfaction for the parties.

Obliging style is a conflict management approach in which the individual places the needs of the other party above their own. Aiming to satisfy the other party by minimizing differences and emphasizing common ground, this style may manifest as sacrifice, obedience, or altruistic generosity (Rahim, 2023). According to Boulding (1962), individuals who adopt the obliging style act as “conflict absorbers,” responding minimally to hostile behavior and even displaying a friendly attitude.

Dominating style is a competitive conflict management approach in which individuals prioritize their own interests while disregarding the expectations of the other party. Based on a win-lose perspective, this style involves assertive and forceful behavior aimed at defending one’s position or protecting one’s rights. Individuals who adopt the dominating style may use their power to achieve goals, ignore the needs of others, and resort to strategies such as deception, bluffing, or appealing to superiors when necessary. Especially those in positions of authority may adopt this style to compel subordinates into compliance. Dominating manifests in two forms: respectful and exploitative. While respectful domination can be effective in certain institutional contexts, exploitative domination undermines the balance of power by taking advantage of the other party (Rahim, 2023).

Avoiding style is a conflict management approach in which individuals disregard both their own needs and the expectations of the other party, preferring to stay away from conflict situations. Also known as suppression, this style may manifest as avoidance of responsibility, evasion of the issue, or withdrawal from threatening situations. Individuals with an avoidant style prefer to delay or ignore the conflict rather than resolve it, thereby satisfying neither their own interests nor those of the other party. Often displaying an indifferent attitude, such individuals may avoid publicly acknowledging the existence of conflict and may refuse to engage with the issue (Rahim, 2023).

Compromising style is an approach in which individuals moderately value both their own interests and the expectations of the other party, relying on the principle of mutual concession. In this style, parties partially relinquish their demands to reach an acceptable outcome, thereby establishing balance and quickly finding middle ground. The compromising style involves more sacrifice than dominating, but

less than obliging. Similarly, it addresses the issue more directly than avoiding but does not explore it as thoroughly as integrating (Rahim, 2023).

The effective management of conflicts that arise at various levels within organizations depends on individuals' knowledge of appropriate methods and strategies, as well as their ability to implement them. Determining which method to use in a given situation largely relies on the extent to which the parties involved are familiar with and competent in these strategies. Educational institutions are no exception to this dynamic. Like other organizations, schools may also experience conflicts of various types and intensities, and the management of such conflicts is directly related to individuals' knowledge and application of effective resolution methods (Günbayı & Karahan, 2006). Considering the significance of conflict management in the organizational context, the aim of this study is to present a systematic review of scholarly articles on conflict management published in Turkey within the scope of TR Index. In addition to evaluating these studies from methodological and ontological perspectives, the study also seeks to shed light on the historical development and future trends of conflict management in the Turkish context. Accordingly, the research aims to identify gaps in the existing literature and offer theoretical contributions to academic discourse. In this context, the study seeks to answer the following questions through an evaluation of articles published in Turkey about conflict management:

1. What is the annual distribution of articles published by journals in the field of conflict management?
2. What is the number of published articles according to data collection techniques (empirical or non-empirical)?
3. Which research methods (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or literature review) have been employed in the published articles?
4. What research designs have been used in the published articles?
5. What is the annual distribution of empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed)?
6. Which published articles have contributed to the field through citations?
7. How have the subject headings of published articles changed over the years?

Methodology

Method and paradigm of research

In this study, articles published on the subject of conflict management between the years 2005 and 2025 were examined. The research employed the systematic review design, one of the qualitative research patterns, using the systematic analysis method. Systematic review is a method that aims to rigorously collect and analyze similar studies conducted within a specific field of research based on predefined methodological criteria, and to comprehensively summarize research trends and overall findings derived from the collected data (Karaçam, 2013). Systematic analysis is a method that helps make sense of large volumes of information through a structured and orderly examination. Moreover, it enables researchers to assess whether sufficient studies have been conducted on specific themes and to identify areas where further research is needed (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008).

The concept of “worldview” is considered a set of fundamental beliefs that guide individuals' actions and decisions (Guba, 1990). In the literature, this concept has been referred to in various ways: some researchers define it as a paradigm (Lincoln et al., 2011; Mertens, 2010), while others associate it with epistemological and ontological assumptions (Crotty, 1998). On the other hand, Neuman (2009) treats worldview as the methodological framework that shapes the overall structure of a study. The intellectual orientations adopted by researchers before beginning a study reflect their philosophical foundations and shape all stages of the research process. A paradigm is linked to the laws of nature that attempt to explain

the order of the universe, and each paradigm seeks to provide its own internal response to these laws. By offering the opportunity to approach the same phenomenon from different perspectives, a paradigm determines the researcher's point of view. In other words, a paradigm encompasses the nature of reality (ontology), the source of knowledge (epistemology), and the analysis of methods (methodology) (Gunbayi & Sorm, 2020). The belief systems held by researchers often lead them to clearly prefer one of the qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods (Creswell, 2021). The worldview underlying this study, which was conducted using a qualitative research approach, is the interpretivist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Günbayi & Sorm, 2018). This perspective allows the researcher to interpret and define reality based on their knowledge, experiences, and the context in which reality exists. This approach acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, suggesting that different individuals may perceive the same situation in different ways, and therefore, reality is constructed within a social context (Büyükoztürk et al., 2020).

Sampling

The population of the study consists of 65 articles included in the TR Index. The study employed criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, and a complete enumeration of the population was achieved.

Data collection

This research is a systematic review. The studies on conflict management selected for analysis were evaluated through a holistic approach based on specific criteria. Document analysis was used as the data collection technique. The literature review was conducted in the TR Index on January 23, 2025. To ensure alignment with the research objective, the keyword search was limited to two terms: conflict and teacher. According to the literature review, a total of 77 articles were identified within the TR Index. One article was a correction notice, and nine articles despite matching the keywords were found to be unrelated to conflict management. Additionally, two articles published in 2003 and 2004 could not be accessed due to access restrictions. As a result, 65 full-text articles were included and analyzed in this study.

Data analysis

In this study, descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis methods, was employed. Descriptive analysis is an analytical approach that involves summarizing and interpreting data obtained through various data collection instruments within the framework of pre-established thematic categories (Gunbayi, 2023).

Findings

The annual distribution of articles published by journals in the field of conflict management

Table 1.

Number of articles by year

Years	n	%
2005-2009	6	9.23
2010-2014	12	18.46
2015-2019	22	33.85
2020 and beyond	25	38.46
Total	65	100.00

Examining the articles written in Turkey on conflict management in five-year periods is significant in terms of demonstrating the development of this field over time. In this study, the years 2005–2009 constitute the first period, 2010–2014 the second period, 2015–2019 the third period, and 2020 and beyond the fourth period. While the first three periods each cover a five-year span, the last period encompasses a six-year timeframe. According to the findings of the systematic review, the fewest number of articles on conflict management were published between 2005 and 2009 (9.23%). The number of articles increased during the periods 2010–2014 (18.46%) and 2015–2019 (33.85%), indicating a growing interest in the topic. The years 2020 and beyond (38.46%) were identified as the period in which the highest number of publications in the field of conflict management appeared.

The number of published articles according to data collection techniques

Table 2.

Distribution of articles by data collection techniques

Data collection techniques	n	%
Empirical Studies	63	96.92
Non-Empirical Studies	2	3.08
Total	65	100.00

In this study, the articles were categorized into two groups based on their data collection techniques, following the classification proposed by Büyüköztürk et al. (2020): empirical (observational, experiential, or experimental) and non-empirical (documentary or textual). Empirical studies collect data using instruments such as surveys, observations, and interviews, whereas non-empirical studies gather data from written and electronically recorded sources such as curricula, regulations, books, newspapers, and reports. An analysis of articles written in Turkey reveals that the majority are empirical studies (96.92%). In contrast, the number of non-empirical studies (3.08%) is significantly lower.

Distribution of articles by research methods

When the distribution of articles by research methods is evaluated, the studies are grouped into empirical and non-empirical categories. In the classification of empirical studies, the framework proposed by Tashakkori and Teddlie was taken into account (Murphy et al., 2007). When the findings of the articles are examined as empirical studies, it is observed that quantitative research (64.62%) significantly outnumbers qualitative (27.68%) and mixed-method (4.62%) studies. When the findings of the articles are evaluated as non-empirical studies, it is found that literature reviews (3.08%) are a rarely used method. Since no theoretical analysis studies were identified, they were not included in Table 3.

Table 3.

Distribution of articles by research methods

Research methods	n	%
Empirical studies		
Quantitative	42	64.62
Qualitative	18	27.68
Mixed methods	3	4.62
Non-empirical studies		
Literature review	2	3.08
Total	65	100.00

Research designs used in empirical studies

Table 4.

Research designs used in empirical studies

Analysis of empirical studies	n	%
Quantitative		
Descriptive	38	60.32
Experimental	2	3.17
Casual comparative	2	3.17
Qualitative		
Case study	9	14.29
Phenomenology	9	14.29
Mixed methods		
Convergent parallel design (parallel databases variant)	2	3.17
Embedded design (experimental variant)	1	1.59
Total	63	100.00

An examination of the findings of the articles reveals that, according to Table 3, most studies on conflict management in the field of education in Turkey are empirical studies. Therefore, the research aimed to explore which research designs were used in these empirical studies. Empirical studies were first divided into three categories (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods) and then further grouped according to their specific research designs. Quantitative studies were classified into three categories. According to this classification, among empirical studies, descriptive research is the most frequently used design within quantitative methods, accounting for 60.32% of the empirical studies. Experimental designs make up 3.17%, and causal comparative designs also constitute 3.17% of the empirical studies. Among the empirical studies employing qualitative research methods, two types of research designs were identified based on the findings: case study and phenomenology. According to the analysis, case study design accounts for 14.29% of the empirical studies, while phenomenological design also represents 14.29% of the total. Empirical studies utilizing mixed methods were categorized into two types: convergent parallel design (parallel databases variant) and embedded design (experimental variant). There are two articles employing the convergent parallel design, comprising 3.17% of empirical studies. The embedded design (experimental variant) was used in only one article, representing 1.59% of the empirical studies. Mixed methods designs include eight core types, as defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) and Günbayı and Sorm (2018): convergent parallel design, explanatory sequential design, exploratory sequential design, embedded design, multiphase/ the evaluation design, transformative/ participatory social justice design, case study design, and action study design.

The annual distribution of empirical studies

Table 5.

Annual distribution of empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods)

	2005-2009		2010-2014		2015-2019		2020 and beyond		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Quantitative	3	50.00	10	83.33	17	77.27	12	52.17	42	66.67
Qualitative	1	16.67	2	16.67	4	18.18	11	47.83	18	28.57
Mixed methods	2	33.33	-	0.00	1	4.55	-	0.00	3	4.76
Total	6	100.00	12	100.00	22	100.00	23	100.00	63	100.00

Table 5 presents the distribution of empirical studies in Turkey over time. It focuses on how quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method studies have been distributed across different time periods. Accordingly, quantitative research methods were used in 3 articles between 2005–2009, 10 articles between 2010–2014, 17 articles between 2015–2019, and 12 articles in 2020 and beyond, totaling 42 articles. Using qualitative research methods, only 1 article was published between 2005–2009, 2 articles between 2010–2014, 4 articles between 2015–2019, and 11 articles in 2020 and beyond, resulting in a total of 18 articles. Regarding mixed methods research, 2 articles were published during 2005–2009 and 1 article during 2015–2019. No mixed methods studies were conducted in the other periods. Thus, the total number of articles employing mixed methods is 3.

Articles that have contributed to the field through citations

Table 6.

Articles that have contributed to the field through citations

Cite	First author	The title of the article	Year
25	Zembat, R.	A Study on Preschool Teachers' Perceived Conflict with School Administrators, Colleagues and Parents	2012
21	Arslantaş, H. İ.	An Investigation of Conflict Management Strategies of The Principals as Perceived by Primary School Teachers	2012
17	Kartal, H.	Bullying and School Climate from the Aspects of the Students and Teachers	2009
17	Türnüklü, A.	Students' Conflicts, Causes, Resolution Strategies and Tactics in High Schools	2007
15	Konak, M.	According to the Teachers' Opinions the Relationship between the Ethical Leadership Behaviors of the Elementary School Principals and Their Conflict Management Strategies	2015
12	Koçak, S.	The Effectiveness Levels of Conflict Management Methods Used by School Administrators	2013
11	Köklü, M.	Participations in Decision Making, Desires for Participation, Job Satisfaction and Conflict Management Styles of Secondary Education Teachers	2012
11	Çinkır, Ş.	Teachers Opinions about the Professional Working Relationships in Schools	2010
10	Arslantaş, H. İ.	The Relationship Between School Principals' Instructional Leadership and Their Use of Constructive and Destructive Dimensions of Conflict Management	2012
10	Aydın, İ.	Sources of Conflict Between Primary School Principals and School Counsellors in Turkey	2011
9	Bartan, M.	Opinions of Mothers, Whose Children Continue Their Preschool Education, Towards the Process of Having Values Acquired to Them	2020
9	Karahan, T. F.	The Effect of Human Relations and Communication Course on the Conflict Resolution and Empathic Skill Levels of Prospective – Teachers'	2006
8	İvrendi, A.	Predicting 5-6 Years Old Children's Number Concept Skills in Terms of Parent and Teacher Variables	2017
8	Tatlilioğlu, K.	Violence and Tyranny at Schools: Risk Factors, Services of Protect, Prevent and Interfere: The Sample of The Konya	2016
8	Seçer, Z.	The Comparison of 68-72 Months Pre-School and Primary School Children's Relationships with Their Teachers and Their School Adjustment	2015
8	Sargın, N.	Examining Prospective Teachers' Conflict and Violence Awareness Levels by Some Variables	2010
8	Türnüklü, A.	Examination Of High School Managers' Conflict Resolution Strategies and Tactics from The Social Constructivist Perspective	2005
6	Ercengiz, M.	An Examination of The Relationship Between Academic Procrastination Behavior and Social Media Dependency of The Faculty of Education Students in Terms of Different Variables	2017
5	Ergul, M.	Educational Problems Experienced by Refugee Students: A Delphi Study from the Teachers' Perspective	2022

5	Tunç, B.	Examining the Relationship between School Administrators' Conflict Management Strategies and School Culture According to Teachers' Views	2020
5	Dönmez, B.	Desicion-Making, Leadership and Conflict in Primary Schools as Loosely Coupled System	2011
4	Korkmaz, F.	The Role of Work-Family Enrichment in Professional Vitality Gain: Structural Equality Model Analysis	2021
4	Ası, D. Ş.	Turkish Adaptation of Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form	2018
4	Nural, E.	Conflict Management Methods Used by the School Principals According to Perceptions of Teachers	2012
3	Tican, C.	Pre-Service Teachers' Entrepreneurship Characteristics and Views of Career Stress	2020
3	Bayır, Ö. G.	Perception of Peace in Students' Drawings	2016
3	Şahin, A.	The Relationship Between Interpersonal Communication Skills and Conflict Management Strategies of Primary School Administrators	2010
3	Argon, T.	Stress Factors Affecting First Level Primary School Teachers	2007
2	Küçüker, E.	Human Relations Problems of Secondary School Teachers Faced during the Emergency Distance Learning Process	2022
2	Usta, I.	Examining the Relationship Between Participative Climate Perception and Organizational Dissent	2020
2	Koç, M. H.	Classroom Teachers' Opinions on Strategies for Coping Difficult Parents	2020
2	Gencel, İ. E.	A case study on Argumentation Based Teaching	2019
2	Gül, İ.	Investigation of Administration and Conflict Resolution Skills of Differences of School Administrators by Teacher's Vision	2018
2	Demirdağ, S.	The Relationship Between Primary School Administrators' Ethical Leadership and Conflict Management Strategies: The Perceptions of Substitute Teacher	2016
2	Okçu, V.	Examining the Relationship between Communication Skills and Conflict Management Styles of School Administrators According to Perceptions of Primary and Secondary School Teachers	2016
2	Altınok, V.	Psychological Violence of Managers Intensity in Educational Institutions	2014
2	Türnüklü, A.	Examination of Teachers' Conflict Resolution Strategies and Tactics from The Perspective of Social Constructivism	2006
1	Yüksel, S.	Investigation of the Relationships Between the Conflict Resolution Strategies Used by School Principals and Teachers' Motivation and Organizational Commitment	2022
1	Atik, U.	Difficulties Encountered in Sound-Based Primary Literacy Teaching According to Teachers' Views	2022
1	Sağbaş, N. Ö.	Teachers' Views on the Effect of the Conflict on the Teaching Performance	2022
1	Kahraman, S.	The Analysis of the Relationship Between the Organisational Climate and Organisational Learning Perceptions of Both Teachers and Principals Working at Schools	2021
1	Öntaş, T.	Implications of Teaching Controversial Issues for the Field of Classroom Education	2021
1	Çatal, U.	The Investigation of Prospective Teachers' Conflict Action Style According to The Levels of Their Emotional Self-Efficacy	2019
1	Akış, G.	An Investigation of the Predictors of School Adjustment in 5-6 Year-Old Preschools	2018

Another objective of this research is to identify the articles that have contributed to the field. For this reason, articles related to conflict published within the scope of the TR Index were listed and evaluated based on the number of citations they received. The articles were ranked from the most cited to the least cited.

According to the research findings, the article titled A Study on Preschool Teachers' Perceived Conflict with School Administrators, Colleagues and Parents by Zembat stands out as the most cited study in the field of conflict, having received 25 citations. Following this, the second most cited article, written by Arslantaş and Özkan, titled An Investigation of Conflict Management Strategies of The Principals as Perceived by Primary School Teachers, received 21 citations. In third place, both receiving 17 citations,

are Bullying and School Climate from the Aspects of the Students and Teachers by Kartal and Bilgin, and Students' Conflicts, Causes, Resolution Strategies and Tactics in High Schools by Türnüklü.

Another noteworthy article is According to the Teachers' Opinions the Relationship between the Ethical Leadership Behaviors of the Elementary School Principals and Their Conflict Management Strategies by Konak and Erdem, which received 15 citations. The article The Effectiveness Levels of Conflict Management Methods Used by School Administrators by Koçak and Baskan Atanur followed with 12 citations. Additionally, Participations in Decision Making, Desires for Participation, Job Satisfaction and Conflict Management Styles of Secondary Education Teachers by Köklü and Teachers Opinions about the Professional Working Relationships in Schools by Çınkır and Çetin Kuru each received 11 citations.

Two other influential studies The Relationship Between School Principals' Instructional Leadership and Their Use of Constructive and Destructive Dimensions of Conflict Management by Arslantaş and Özkan, and Sources of Conflict Between Primary School Principals and School Counsellors in Turkey by Aydın et al. received 10 citations each. The articles Opinions of Mothers, Whose Children Continue Their Preschool Education, Towards the Process of Having Values Acquired to Them by Bartan and Arıcı, and The Effect of Human Relations and Communication Course on the Conflict Resolution and Empathic Skill Levels of Prospective Teachers' by Karahan et al. were both cited 9 times.

Five articles each received 8 citations: Predicting 5-6 Years Old Children's Number Concept Skills in Terms of Parent and Teacher Variables by İvrendi and Güleç, Violence and Tyranny at Schools: Risk Factors, Services of Protect, Prevent and Interfere: The Sample of The Konya by Tatlılıoğlu, The Comparison of 68-72 Months Pre-School and Primary School Children's Relationships with Their Teachers and Their School Adjustment by Seçer et al., Examining Prospective Teachers' Conflict and Violence Awareness Levels by Some Variables by Sargın, and Examination Of High School Managers' Conflict Resolution Strategies and Tactics from The Social Constructivist Perspective by Türnüklü.

The article An Examination of The Relationship Between Academic Procrastination Behavior and Social Media Dependency of The Faculty of Education Students in Terms of Different Variables by Ercengiz et al. received 6 citations. Articles with 5 citations include Educational Problems Experienced by Refugee Students: A Delphi Study from the Teachers' Perspective by Ergul and Arslan, Examining the Relationship between School Administrators' Conflict Management Strategies and School Culture According to Teachers' Views by Tunç and Özkara, and Desicion-Making, Leadership and Conflict in Primary Schools as Loosely Coupled System by Dönmez et al.

The study titled The Role of Work-Family Enrichment in Professional Vitality Gain: Structural Equality Model Analysis by Korkmaz received 4 citations. Similarly, Turkish Adaptation of Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form by Ası and Karabay, and Conflict Management Methods Used by the School Principals According to Perceptions of Teachers by Nural et al. also received 4 citations. Three citations were recorded for the following articles: Pre-Service Teachers' Entrepreneurship Characteristics and Views of Career Stress by Tican, Perception of Peace in Students' Drawings by Gürdoğan Bayır and Cengeli Kose, The Relationship Between Interpersonal Communication Skills and Conflict Management Strategies of Primary School Administrators by Şahin, and Stress Factors Affecting First Level Primary School Teachers by Argon and Ateş.

Several studies received 2 citations each: Human Relations Problems of Secondary School Teachers Faced during the Emergency Distance Learning Process by Küçükler and Dernek Uzun, Examining the Relationship Between Participative Climate Perception and Organizational Dissent by Usta and Karalar, Classroom Teachers' Opinions on Strategies for Coping Difficult Parents by Koç, A Case Study on Argumentation Based Teaching by Gencil and İlman, Investigation of Administration and Conflict Resolution Skills of Differences of School Administrators by Teacher's Vision by Gül and Türkmen, The Relationship Between Primary School Administrators' Ethical Leadership and Conflict Management Strategies: The Perceptions of Substitute Teacher by Demirdağ, Examining the Relationship between Communication Skills and Conflict Management Styles of School Administrators

According to Perceptions of Primary and Secondary School Teachers by Okçu et al., Psychological Violence of Managers Intensity in Educational Institutions by Altınok, and Examination of Teachers' Conflict Resolution Strategies and Tactics from the Perspective of Social Constructivism by Tüknüklü.

Each of the following articles received 1 citation: Investigation of the Relationships Between the Conflict Resolution Strategies Used by School Principals and Teachers' Motivation and Organizational Commitment by Yüksel et al., Difficulties Encountered in Sound-Based Primary Literacy Teaching According to Teachers' Views by Atik and Sağırılı, Teachers' Views on the Effect of the Conflict on the Teaching Performance by Sağbaş and Özkan, The Analysis of the Relationship Between the Organizational Climate and Organizational Learning Perceptions of Both Teachers and Principals Working at Schools by Kahraman and Usta, Implications of Teaching Controversial Issues for the Field of Classroom Education by Öntaş et al., The Investigation of Prospective Teachers' Conflict Action Style According to the Levels of Their Emotional Self-Efficacy by Çatal and İkiz, and An Investigation of the Predictors of School Adjustment in 5–6 Year-Old Preschools by Akış and Alakoç Pirpir. Additionally, 21 articles published between 2015 and 2024 have not yet received any citations. Citation counts for all articles are presented in Table 6.

The change in topics of the published articles by year

Table 7.

The change in topics of the published articles by year

Topics	2005-2009		2010-2014		2015-2019		2020 and beyond		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Conflict and management	4	66.67	10	83.33	7	31.82	13	52.00	34	52.31
School Climate	2	33.33	2	16.67	15	68.18	12	48.00	31	47.69
Total	6	100.00	12	100.00	22	100.00	25	100.00	65	100.00

Another aim of the study is to identify how the topics related to conflict have changed over the years. Table 7 presents the topic categories and the number of articles published in each period. An examination of the subjects and article counts reveals that, in the field of conflict and management, 4 articles (66.67%) were published between 2005–2009, 10 articles (83.33%) between 2010–2014, 7 articles (31.82%) between 2015–2019, and 13 articles (52%) in 2020 and beyond. Regarding the topic of school climate, 2 articles (33.33%) were published between 2005–2009, 2 articles (16.67%) between 2010–2014, 15 articles (68.18%) between 2015–2019, and 12 articles (48%) in 2020 and beyond.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the articles published within the TR Index in Turkey on the theme of conflict management in terms of research methods and addressed topics, and to provide a historical development analysis to guide future research.

In this context, the first research question addressed is the distribution of studies on conflict management in Turkey over the years. Based on an analysis of the articles in five-year periods, it was found that the number of articles published between 2005 and 2009 was quite limited; however, this number has increased significantly in the following years. The limited number of studies in the early period may be due to the fact that conflict management was not yet a prominent topic in educational sciences at that time and the number of researchers specialized in this field was relatively low. The period after 2020 stands out as the time when the highest number of studies on conflict management was published. This finding indicates that the topic of conflict management is gaining increasing importance in Turkey and is being addressed more intensively in academic circles. At the same time, this suggests that conflict management research in Turkey is still an emerging, dynamic, and much-needed area.

Another research question examined in this study concerns the distribution of articles based on data collection techniques. Accordingly, all articles published within the scope of TR Index were classified as either empirical studies (based on observation, surveys, or interviews) or non-empirical studies (documentary or archival research). The findings revealed that the number of empirical studies is considerably higher than that of non-empirical ones. This suggests that observational or experimental methods are more frequently preferred in conflict management research conducted in Turkey.

Another key dimension examined in the study is the distribution of articles based on their research methodologies. Accordingly, empirical studies were classified as quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research, and each was evaluated within the framework of the paradigm it reflects. This categorization of research designs provides important insights into the methodological orientations of conflict management studies conducted in Turkey. When examining the history of research, it is evident that for a long period, the quantitative research paradigm dominated many disciplines. This paradigm incorporated various quantitative research models and was regarded as the only valid approach (Gökçek et al., 2013). However, during the 20th century, some scholars began to challenge the assumptions and principles of the quantitative approach and gradually adopted qualitative research paradigms (Kıral & Kıral, 2011). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the early stages between 1900 and 1950 were highly significant for the development of qualitative research. During the 1960s, the mixed methods paradigm emerged, advocating the simultaneous use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single study. This paradigm, which is based on the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in a single research process, began to establish its foundational framework during this period (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In subsequent years, mixed methods research gained greater theoretical significance and became more widely applied in practice (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). The findings of this study reveal that quantitative research dominates the field of conflict management in Turkey. This reflects the continued influence of the positivist paradigm in academic research. The positivist approach assumes that reality exists independently of the researcher and that an objective reality exists outside the individual. According to this view, reality is observable, measurable, and can be analyzed using objective methods. Researchers who adopt quantitative research methods generally believe that facts can be separated from emotions and that the world consists of a single, objectively discoverable reality (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). However, in recent years, there has been an increase in qualitative research based on anti-positivist approaches. The social constructivist paradigm assumes that individuals attempt to understand the world through the social and cultural contexts in which they live. According to this perspective, individuals construct subjective and object-oriented meanings based on their lived experiences. These constructed meanings are diverse and multifaceted; therefore, rather than reducing participants' perspectives to a few categories, researchers aim to reveal their complexity and diversity. The main goal of such research is to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' viewpoints regarding the studied phenomenon. Within this framework, the researcher's intention is to explore and interpret how individuals make sense of the world (Creswell, 2021). The research findings also indicate that studies using mixed methods are present in the literature. Researchers with a pragmatic perspective have developed the mixed methods approach. This method is proposed as an alternative when neither the outcome-oriented focus of quantitative studies nor the process-oriented evaluations of qualitative studies alone are sufficient. In cases where the nature of the research problem necessitates the holistic integration of both process and outcome dimensions, and when sufficient resources are available to support this approach, the use of mixed methods becomes a highly appropriate and effective choice (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). On the other hand, non-empirical studies were treated as a separate category in this research. Among these, studies based on the literature review were found to be the least preferred research method. Furthermore, no theoretical analysis studies were identified among all the articles reviewed.

Another notable finding that emerged from the research relates to the research designs used in empirical studies. Quantitative designs were categorized into three groups: descriptive, experimental, and causal comparative research. Descriptive research aims to explain the phenomenon under investigation in detail, evaluate it across different standards, and uncover potential relationships between variables (Gunbayi, 2023). The analysis showed that descriptive research constitutes the majority of quantitative studies in

this field. Experimental research refers to studies in which the researcher systematically manipulates independent variables in a controlled setting to test their effect on dependent variables. The primary objective of this design is to investigate the impact of systematically altered independent variables on dependent variables in order to establish a valid and reliable cause-and-effect relationship. Causal-comparative research, on the other hand, seeks to identify the causes of an event or condition that has already occurred, as well as the variables that may influence these causes (Büyüköztürk et al., 2023). According to the research findings, both experimental and causal comparative studies are minimally represented within the broader group of quantitative research. Qualitative designs were evaluated according to several categories, including case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, critical discourse, discourse analysis, narrative inquiry, action research, and systematic review (Lapa et al., 2018). The findings revealed that among the qualitative designs, only case study and phenomenology were utilized in the reviewed articles. It was observed that case study and phenomenology were employed with equal frequency within qualitative research. Mixed method designs were classified into the following categories: the convergent parallel design such as the parallel databases variant, the data transformation variant, the data validation variant/the questionnaire variant and the fully integrated variant; explanatory sequential design including follow-up explanations variant, participant selection variant /case selection variant; the exploratory sequential design such as theory-development variant/ new variable development variant, instrument-development variant/ survey-development variant, intervention development variant, and digital tool development variant; the embedded design including embedded experimental variant, embedded correlational variant, and embedded instrument development and validation variant; the multiphase design/ the evaluation design used in large-scale program development and evaluation projects, multilevel statewide studies, or single mixed methods studies that combine both concurrent and sequential phases; the transformative design/ participatory social justice design incorporating the feminist lens transformative variant, the disability lens transformative variant, the socioeconomic class lens transformative variant; case study design including case study design with holistic single case design, case study design with embedded single case design, case study design with multiple case design, case study design with embedded multiple case design; and finally, action study design such as technical action study variant, participatory action study variant, and emancipatory action study variant (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Günbayi & Sorm, 2018). According to the research findings, only two types of mixed method designs were identified in the articles: the convergent parallel design with the parallel databases variant and the embedded design with experimental variant. It has been determined that mixed method studies are quite limited among the empirical research examined.

Another key finding that emerged from the study concerns the distribution of empirical studies on conflict management in organizations over time. As presented in Table 5, a total of six studies were published during the period 2005–2009, half of which were conducted using quantitative methods (50%), while the remainder employed qualitative (16.67%) and mixed methods (33.33%). This period can be characterized as one in which the field was still represented by a limited number of research examples and methodological diversity was relatively constrained. During the period 2010–2014, the number of published studies increased to twelve, the majority of which (83.33%) were conducted using quantitative approaches. The proportion of qualitative studies remained at 16.67%. These findings indicate that the dominant research paradigm during this period was positivist, and that researchers preferred analyses based on measurable variables and numerical data. This trend can also be associated with a broader movement toward evidence-based practices in the fields of education and administration. In the years between 2015 and 2019, an increase was observed both in the number and methodological diversity of empirical studies. Of the 22 studies published in this period, 77.27% employed quantitative methods, 18.18% used qualitative methods, and 4.55% adopted a mixed-methods approach. Although quantitative studies continued to dominate, there was a noticeable rise in qualitative research as well, suggesting that researchers began to adopt a more contextual and in-depth understanding of conflict management. The post-2020 period represents a phase in which qualitative studies significantly increased compared to previous years. Of the 23 studies published in this period, 52.17% were quantitative, while 47.83% employed qualitative methods. This shift reveals a growing influence of the anti-positivist paradigm in the field of educational administration and organizational studies in Turkey, indicating a movement among researchers toward interpreting social phenomena through participatory perspectives and

interpretative frameworks. Mixed-methods research, however, remained underrepresented. Only three studies in total were conducted using a mixed-methods approach. In conclusion, the distribution of empirical research over time suggests that positivist approaches have long dominated studies on organizational conflict management in Turkey. However, since 2015, qualitative approaches have started to gain traction in the literature. For future studies, enhancing methodological diversity particularly through the broader application of mixed-method designs will contribute significantly to the depth and richness of the field.

Identifying the studies that have contributed to the field among the articles written on conflict management is significant for detecting trends over the years and guiding future research. In this study, the article with the highest number of citations was listed first. In this context, the analysis revealed that the most frequently cited studies generally focus on themes such as school-based conflicts, school climate, ethical leadership, and communication. The study conducted by Zembat (2012), which examines the conflicts perceived by preschool teachers from a multi-stakeholder perspective, received 25 citations and became the most cited research. This finding underscores the importance of conflicts experienced in the relationships among teachers, administrators, and families during early childhood education. Following this, the study by Arslantaş (2012), which investigates school principals' conflict management approaches through the perceptions of primary school teachers, has received 21 citations, establishing itself as a strong reference point in the field. Similarly, the studies by Kartal (2009) and Türnüklü (2007), each receiving 17 citations, focus particularly on student conflicts, bullying, and resolution strategies. These four studies reveal that conflict management is a complex process that affects all stakeholders within the school environment. Another noteworthy example is the study conducted by Konak (2015), which examines the relationship between primary school principals' ethical leadership behaviors and their conflict management strategies. With 15 citations, this research makes significant contributions to the field. Other studies by researchers such as Koçak (2013), Köklü (2012), and Çinkır (2010) have also gained visibility in the literature by receiving over ten citations. Most of these studies center on teachers' perceptions of administrators and focus on the practical implications of conflict management in organizational relationships. On the other hand, although some studies have received only one or two citations, they provide original contributions in terms of content. For instance, Demirdağ (2016) sheds light on field realities by addressing the relationship between ethical leadership and conflict management from the perspective of substitute teachers, while Usta (2020) adds a noteworthy dimension to the field by examining the relationship between organizational dissent and climate. Some studies have not yet received any citations. This may be due to the insufficient time elapsed since their publication for them to generate scientific impact.

One of the significant findings obtained from the study is the change observed over the years in the thematic focus of the articles published in the field. The data in Table 7 were evaluated within the framework of four distinct periods 2005–2009, 2010–2014, 2015–2019, 2020 and beyond, the trends throughout these periods were revealed. When these intervals are taken into account, it is observed that the research areas predominantly revolve around the themes of “Conflict and Management” and “School Climate.” An examination of the studies published between 2005 and 2009 shows that only six articles belonged to this period, and 66.67% of them were related to the theme of “Conflict and Management.” This finding indicates that the early literature was primarily focused on managing in-school conflicts. On the other hand, the fact that the theme of “School Climate” accounted for only 33.33% during this period reveals that interest in this area was still limited. This pattern suggests that the subject of conflict in organizations entered the literature relatively earlier, while studies on school climate began to gain momentum at a later stage. During the second period, from 2010 to 2014, a total of 12 articles were published, the vast majority (83.33%) of which were again associated with the theme of “Conflict and Management.” This finding indicates that the orientation emerging in the previous period was further reinforced, and that researchers' attention increasingly focused on the nature, types, and management strategies of organizational conflicts. However, the proportion of studies addressing the theme of “School Climate” during the same period remained at 16.67%, showing that conflict management-oriented approaches were still dominant in this phase, while processes such as school climate had not yet been sufficiently prioritized. The years between 2015 and 2019 emerged as a period marked by a noteworthy

transformation. Of the 22 studies published during this period, 68.18% were related to “School Climate” and 31.82% to “Conflict and Management.” This finding indicates a significant increase in academic interest in school climate and shows that it began to be valued as much as conflict management. One of the main reasons for this trend could be that school climate started to be addressed as a structure that influences organizational behavior, teacher-student relationships, and the overall quality of education. Finally, when the data from the post-2020 period are examined, it is noteworthy that both themes were addressed in a balanced manner. Among the 25 studies, 52% focused on “Conflict and Management” and 48% on “School Climate.” This balance suggests an increasing awareness that the organizational structure must be evaluated not only through crisis-time resolution strategies but also alongside preventive and supportive climate elements. Overall, it is seen that the theme of conflict and its management initially came to the forefront in the Turkish educational administration literature, but following 2015, school climate studies began to share this attention, and especially in the most recent period, both themes started to be addressed jointly. This trend signals a transition to a holistic approach that necessitates the evaluation of both the structural and procedural aspects of the school environment.

Conclusion

Although there has been an increase in the number of studies on conflict management in the context of educational administration in Turkey in recent years, the limited number of systematic reviews offering historical and methodological integrity in the field makes this study significant. In this context, articles published within the scope of TR Index were examined in detail in terms of their distribution over the years, methodological preferences, research designs, and thematic focus. In addition, periodical classifications made to make the findings more comprehensible, along with the justifications for these classifications, were clearly presented. The findings of the study reveal that research on organizational conflict management in Turkey has increased over time and that academic interest in this field has grown considerably, especially in the post-2020 period. However, it was determined that the quantitative research paradigm had been dominant for many years and that studies largely relied on measurable data. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that after 2015, qualitative and mixed-method studies also began to find their place in the field. The findings of the study show that the themes of conflict management and school climate have undergone a transformation over the years, and that especially in the post-2015 period, these two areas have started to be addressed together, indicating a transition toward a more holistic understanding today. This suggests that focusing solely on crisis management in school environments is insufficient, and that preventive and supportive climate elements must also be considered.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that researchers adopt qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches, as conflict management is a multidimensional issue that cannot be adequately addressed through a single method. These designs allow for both in-depth insight and generalizable results.
- It is recommended that school administrators, teachers, and educational managers and planners not only focus on resolving existing conflicts but also consider preventive factors such as school climate when developing conflict management strategies.
- It is recommended that the scope of this study, which was conducted using the TR Index database, be expanded by incorporating other databases such as DergiPark.

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Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest has been declared by the author

Author Contribution

Corresponding author Pınar Küçük Akşit: Conceptualization, data curation, investigation, methodology, writing original draft, review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

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Ethics Approval

In the writing process of the study titled “**Conflict Management in Organizations: A Systematic Review**”, the rules of scientific, ethical and citation were followed; it was undertaken by the author of this study that no falsification was made on the collected data. “Journal of Action Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research and Editor” had no responsibility for all ethical violations to be encountered, and all responsibility belongs to the author and that the study was not submitted for evaluation to any other academic publishing environment.

Institutional review board (IRB) approval

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of this research is not required.

Data Availability Statement

Anonymized data from this study can be made available on request from pkucukaksit@gmail.com