



Turizm Akademik Dergisi

Tourism Academic Journal

www.turizmakademik.com



Conflict Management Methods of Managers: An Empirical Study of the Turkish Tourism Industry

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Abstract

Although considered unwanted by the tourism industry, it has been acknowledged that conflict can foster new ideas which contribute in a positive way by providing an opportunity for self-critique and maintaining internal dynamism through change and innovations. For these reasons how to manage conflict is a crucial skill for managers. This research aims to determine the extent to which conflict management methods change according to demographic characteristics or the characteristics of the enterprises. It examines the preferences of managers on integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding methods. Survey research has been conducted on 1098 tourism enterprise managers in Turkey. The first part of the survey includes questions on the personal characteristics of managers and the general characteristics of their enterprises. The second part includes 28 statements to explore the conflict management strategies of the managers. Percentage, frequency, t-test for independent samples, one-factor variance analysis (Anova) and Bonferroni test have been used in the research. The survey analysis establishes a significant relationship between conflict management methods of managers, their demographic characteristics, and the characteristics of the enterprises they work at.

Key Words: Conflict, Conflict Management, Conflict Management Methods, Tourism Enterprises Managers

Jel Code: M12

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Tuna, M. & Türkmen, F. (2014). Conflict Management Methods of Managers: An Empirical Study of the Turkish Tourism Industry, Turizm Akademik Dergisi, 1 (1), 39-55.

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts in an organization may arise from lack of cooperation amongst individuals and the groups, or the mutual dismissal of the conflicting sides' demands, interests, or the values (Topaloğlu, 2005: 7). Studies on conflict management methods are conducted in order to manage these situations and aim to analyze the personal experiences of conflicts and the intentions of the individuals regarding the conflicts (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma & Nauta, 2001: 646). The ability to manage conflicts is considered one of the fundamental factors for achieving managerial success (Everard, Morris & Wilson, 2004: 99) and conflict management is considered as falling within the domain of the leader's responsibility (Kim, Sohn & Wall, 1999: 130).

Conflict is a part of not only the social life, but all organized life. Since conflicts are inevitable, managers must learn to benefit from the conflicts in order to realize organizational aims (Mirzeoğlu, 2005: 51). Hence, although individuals who take part in conflicts may find it hard to cooperate, in the end these situations may foster the individuals' personalities and increase job satisfaction to tolerable levels (Schrumpf, Crawford & Bodine, 2007: 39). Conflict is not only a subject for management and organizational psychology; studies from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economy also deal with conflicts (Asunakutlu & Safran, 2004: 27; Üngüren, 2008: 882; Rhenman, Stromberg, & Westerlund, 1970: 57). There are many definitions of the term 'conflict' in the literature. These differences are related to evaluating conflict as a process, a type of communication, or an outcome (Alexander, 1995: 33). Conflicts frequently pivot around disagreements between conflicting sides regarding resource usage, expectations, aims, and conflicting ideas (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001: 41). Rahim (2002: 206) defines conflict as an interaction, which is revealed in the form of disconformities or disagreement whereas Sirivun (2001: 7) defines the term as a process, which is a result of the disagreement and disconformities between the social entities and which occurs as a result of the interaction between these entities. On the other hand, Ting-Toomey (1994: 360) defines conflict as the discord of the values, expectations, perceived processes and outcomes, which are the result of the material and relational problems between two or more parties.

Conflicts mostly damage the relationship between two parties. Especially dysfunctional conflicts may have negative consequences for the attitudes and behaviors of individuals who contribute to organizational aims and may lead to a loss of energy related to the fo-

cal point (Lydia, 2009). However, it has been asserted that organizations without conflicts are doomed to failure due to the absence of dynamism (Regnet, 1999: 12). Organizational conflicts may not always have devastating results, but may be results of the different individual perceptions (Rees, Kemp & Davis, 2012: 20). Moreover, one should recall that conflicts are often the starting points of change, evolution and development (Günbayı & Karahan, 2006: 210), and are inevitable features in organizations (Everard et al., 2004: 99; Asunakutlu, Safran & Akgöl, 2004: 170; Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 2000: 225; Hodge & Anthony, 1991: 528; Rahim, 2001: 1). Since conflicts may be used for organizational continuity, efficiency, and development and since they may lead to organizational failure, the management of the conflicts is highly important (Özmen, 1997: 12-13; Tjosvold, 1991: 53; Aydın, 1984: 9). Within this context, Rahim (1992: 6) claims that the conflicts show the extent to which the organizations are healthy, and add that organizational theory will have an important deficit without any works to gain insight into organizational conflicts. Rothwell & Kazanas (2003: 490) argue that disagreements between aims and values among the individuals or the groups, competition over the resources, and the communication problems lie at the sources of organizational conflicts. If conflicts can be controlled, they may have positive consequences for modern organizations. These can include increasing cooperation between the members of the organization, and developing the capacities and the innovative structure of the organization. With the help of the feedback provided by the conflicts, the organization may adopt a critical perspective, intra-organizational relations may deepen, and organizational problems may be solved. At this point, the conflict management strategies of managers are crucial for organizational continuity (Chaudhry, Shami, Saif & Ahmed, 2008: 345) and for maintaining the efficiency of the employees (Brewer, Mitchell & Weber, 2002: 78). In fact, Peterson & Behfar (2003: 103) revealed, in their study, that the relationship between the conflict and the organizational performance is highly important for innovation, organizational dynamism, determination of possible conflict levels, coordination and avoidance of previous problems. On the other hand, the study of Kitchin (2010: 107) found that the organizational conflicts may be hidden or salient, and that the determination of organizational conflicts may become more difficult due to features of the organizational culture. For these reasons unrevealed conflicts may constitute a potential source of problem for the organizations, the managers have to develop alternative methods to deal with the conflicts (Badaracco, 1997: 169).

In conclusion, conflicts are present in all organizations and they might have both positive and negative consequences (Gibson et al., 2000: 225). What is important in the management of conflicts is to obtain positive consequences for the organization. As such, the managers may benefit from the conflicts to provide innovation and development to the organizations. In case of the organizations, in which the conflicts are not managed, the conflicts may result with destructive effects such as inefficiency, stress, or job loss. In this context, resolving conflict may be defined as the management of the disagreement and the discontent to the benefit of the organization by controlling the levels of the conflict between parties (Akkirman, 1998: 3).

Conflict Management Methods

Avoiding conflict and the maintaining organizational success are among the main issues facing managers. This is because managers have to define conflict management strategies for various conflicts. It is claimed that some of the methods provide temporary solutions whereas the others solve the problems permanently. At this point, managers have to decide on the proper methods to achieve either temporary or permanent solutions (Şahin, Emini & Ünsal, 2006: 556). Consequently, it is not appropriate for organizational problems to remain unresolved.

The more important thing for resolving the conflict is the extent to which the solution is satisfactory to all conflicting sides. Due to this, more than one solution may be employed to solve a problem (Baykal & Kovancı, 2008: 24-25). A solution welcomed by all sides is not necessary for the management of conflicts. The level of conflict for organizational efficiency and the management of the conflicts by proper means are more important. This is because conflict management methods are inclined to reveal themselves according to the behavioral models of the individuals (Gümüşeli, 1994: 22). Conflict management methods, which have been defined by Rahim (2004: 9) as integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating, and avoiding, have been considered appropriate methods of scaling (Şirin & Yetim, 2009: 187). These five methods, which may be used to classify methods of conflict management, are appropriate when analyzing individual and organizational conflicts (Rahim, 2004: 10).

The methods used to manage conflicts also reveal the managers' leadership style. In order to minimize the influence of conflicts over organizations, managers have to determine one or more than one of the conflict management methods and try to decrease the in-

fluence of the conflicts over the organizations. During conflict management, managers have to determine the sources of conflict, decrease the uncertainties related with the conflict, and adopt a cooperative management style based on confidence (Wall & Callister, 1995: 540-541). This situation is highly important when presenting the optics of the conflict process by the managers, their perceptions on the sources of conflict, and the management of the conflict to the benefit of the organization by determining the points of the conflicting sides (Bumin, 1990: 22).

Managers who aim to deal with conflicts have to be aware of cultural diversity, organizational aims, teamwork, and the importance of the varied groups within the organization. They should adopt a cooperative managerial style that will consider the importance of both the competition and the cooperative decision-making style (Aritzeta & Balluerka, 2006: 764). One should not forget that the perpetuation of conflicts might end up with decreasing employee performance by creating communication problems and by harming the organizational harmony (Baykal & Kovancı, 2008: 37). Hence, given that the proper conflict management is related with the usage of appropriate conflict management methods. Table 1 reveals the appropriate conflict management situations for effective conflict management by the managers.

Table 1. The Proper /Improper Situations of Conflict Management Methods

Method	Proper Conditions	Improper Conditions
Integrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subject is complex • If the synthesis of the ideas is important to solve the problem • If there is need of the contribution of the other party to solve the problem • If there is enough time to solve the problem • If the problem cannot be solved by only one of the parties • If there is need for the sources owned by the two parties to solve the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the problem is simple • If there is urgent need for decision-making • If one of the conflicting parties does not pay attention to the result • If one of the conflicting parties does not have the ability to solve the problem
Obliging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If one of the conflicting parties considers itself as wrong • If the subject is more important for the other party • If the two parties agree to renounce their interests in acquiring from each other • If one of the conflicting parties is weaker than the other • If the survival of the relationship between the two parties is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subject is very important • If one of the parties is right • If the opposing party is wrong or unfair
Compromising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the aims of the two parties are private and important • If each parties are equal in power • If no consensus can be reached • If the integrating and the dominating methods have been unsuccessful. • If the two parties demand a temporary solution to a complex problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If one of the parties is stronger than the other • If the problem is complex
Dominating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subject is simple or unimportant • If there is urgent need for decision-making • If there is no possibility that the conflicting parties can reach a consensus • If the chiefs have to deal with the juniors • If the other party's decision requires high costs • If the juniors do not have the ability to achieve sufficient knowledge on the decisions • If the subject is very important for you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subject is complex • If the subject is not very important • If the two parties have equal power • If there is no need for rapid decision-making • If the juniors have sufficient level of knowledge on the subject
Avoiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subject is simple or unimportant • If the costs of interaction of the two parties is higher than the benefits to be obtained • If there is need for waiting period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subject is important • If there is the responsibility of decision making • If the conflicting parties do not agree upon a solution but one is required • If there is need for urgent decision-making

Source: Rahim, 2004: 261; Sportsman & Hamilton, 2007: 158; Karip, 2010: 71.

METHOD

Universe and the Sample

The universe of this research comprises the (A) group of travel agencies and the three, four and five-star hotels, operating in Turkey. Within the scope of

this re search, (A) group travel agencies (6496), three-star hotels (641), four star hotels (543), and five star hotels (319) includes the universe for the case for Turkey. The universe of this study has been stratified according to the seven geographic regions of Turkey and the cases have been selected based on the cluster sampling method in order to maintain representativeness. Since

the universe includes more than 10.000 enterprises, we used the unlimited universe ($N > 10.000$) and the universe volume calculation formula (H) developed by Özdamar (2001: 257). The sample volume of this research has been calculated for each four different types of enterprises. In other words, we intended to sample 245 managers from every different enterprise. Based on these, we reached to 350 managers of (A) group travel agencies, 247 three-star hotel managers, 252 four-star hotel managers, and 249 five-star hotel managers, which amount to a number of 1098 participants.

Scales used in Data Collection

Survey method has been used for data collection in this research. The survey comprises three parts. The first part includes data on the demographic characteristics of participant managers and the enterprises that they work at. In the second part, the scale for conflict management method, which includes 28 items and 5 sub-dimensions, has been used. This scale has been developed by Rahim (1983) and has been labeled as the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II-ROCI-II). 5-point Likert scale has been used for the evaluation of each statement by the managers and each statement has been scored as the following: “Strongly Disagree=1”, “Disagree=2”, “Neither agree nor disagree=3”, “Agree=4” and “Strongly Agree=5”.

Aim of the Research

This research aims to determine the relationship between conflict management methods of managers who work at travel agencies and hotels, their demographic characteristics and the characteristics of the enterprises.

Analysis of the Data

The data obtained from the survey has been analyzed by using SPSS Statistical Software. Confirmatory factor analysis of the scale has been conducted and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test has shown the adequacy of the sample ($KMO=0,913$) whereas the Bartlett test has shown the applicability of the factor analysis ($\chi^2 = 17984, 693$; $p < 0,001$). Five factors which are integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding have been determined same as the original scales' dimensions. Besides, the alpha reliability coefficient of the scale has been measured as $\alpha=0,922$, and the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the five factors and their sub-dimensions have been calculated as over $\alpha=0, 70$. Hence, the scale for the conflict management methods seems reliable. The research has shown the demographic characteristics of

the managers and the characteristics of the enterprises in the form of frequency and percentage distribution. The Bonferroni test has been used to compare the participant managers' personality types in terms of the dimensions. In addition, t-test of the independent samples for the groups with two variables has been used to compare individual and organizational characteristics. Additionally, one-factor variance analysis has been used for groups with more than two variables.

Findings and Discussion

42.3% of the participants are female ($f=465$) and 57.7% are male ($f=633$). Regarding the participants' ages, 16.2% are below the age of 25 ($f=178$), 48.1% are between 26 and 35 ($f=528$), 29.6% are between 36 and 45 ($f=325$), and 6.1% are over the age of 46 ($f=67$). Also, 96% of the participants are high school graduates, associate or undergraduate, whereas 2% are primary school graduates and 2% have graduate degrees. Finally, 22% of the participants hold top executive roles (director general or deputy director general), 28.1% hold mid-level positions (department manager or deputy department manager), and 49.9% of the participants hold junior positions (chief and deputy chief).

The analysis of the frequency and the percentage distribution of the enterprises' characteristics which are type of enterprise, the geographical location of the enterprise, the status of the enterprise, and the operating period of the enterprise shows that the (A) group travel agencies constitute 31.8% of the participants. The following are the percentage of managers based on hotel ranking: five-star (22.7%), four-star (23,0%), or three-star hotels (22.5%). 30% of the managers work in hotels located in the Aegean region, while 18.9% are located in Mediterranean region, 17.9% in Central Anatolian region, 16.2% in Marmara region and 11% in the Black Sea region. The number of the managers who work in the Eastern and the Southeastern Anatolian regions amounts to 5.9%. On the other hand, 58.3% of the managers work at domestic independent firms. Finally, 61.3% of the participants work at tourism enterprises with an operating period of less than ten years.

Table 2. Statistical Analysis on the Comparison of Conflict Management Methods

Conflict Management Methods	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	P
Integrating	4,20 a	0,71	237,086	0,000*
Obliging	3,64 b	0,77		
Dominating	3,63 b	0,83		
Avoiding	3,53 c	1,02		
Compromising	4,05 d	0,75		

* $p < 0,001$ ^{a, b, c, d} The difference between the groups with different letters under the same column are significant.

Table 2 which provides the results of the “Bonferroni” test reveals a significant difference between the averages for each conflict management method ($p < 0,001$). Mean values show that participant managers mostly used integrating methods ($\bar{X} = 4,20$) and lastly the avoidance method ($\bar{X} = 3,53$). The participants are inclined to use the obliging ($\bar{X} = 3,64$) and the dominating methods ($\bar{X} = 3,63$) at equal levels. Finally, the second mostly used conflict management method is found as the compromising method ($\bar{X} = 4,05$).

integrating ($p = 0,008$; $p < 0,05$) and the obliging methods ($p = 0,000$; $p < 0,05$) and the ages of the participants, but also shows that no significant difference exists between the managers’ age and the other conflict management methods ($p > 0,05$).

The results of the one-factor variance analysis in Table 5 shows a significant difference between the conflict management methods and the education level ($p < 0,05$) with the exception of the compromising method ($p = 0,173$; $p > 0,05$).

Table 3. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Gender of Participants

Conflict Management Methods	Gender	\bar{X}	s.d.	t	p
Integrating	Male	4,21	0,66	0,698	0,485
	Female	4,18	0,77		
Obliging	Male	3,56	0,76	4,251	0,000***
	Female	3,76	0,77		
Dominating	Male	3,56	0,82	3,543	0,000***
	Female	3,74	0,86		
Avoiding	Male	3,38	1,02	5,474	0,000***
	Female	3,72	1,00		
Compromising	Male	4,02	0,75	1,198	0,231
	Female	4,08	0,76		

*** $p < 0,001$

The results of the t-test for independent samples, illustrated in Table 3, show a significant difference between the conflict management methods and the genders of the participants, with the exception of the integrating and compromising methods. Mean values show that females are more likely to use the obliging, dominating, and avoiding methods than the males. These findings might be interpreted as indicating that females are more likely to use their authority, ignore the problems, and adopt the obliging methods compared to the male managers.

The results of the one-factor variance analysis in Table 4 shows a significant difference between the

The results of the one-factor variance analysis in Table 6 demonstrates a significant difference between the conflict management methods and the administrative experiences ($p < 0,05$).

The results of the one-factor variance analysis in Table 7 shows a significant difference between the conflict management methods and a manager’s administrative status ($p < 0,05$), with the exception of the compromising method ($p = 0,544$; $p > 0,05$).

Table 4. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Age of Participants

Conflict Management Methods	Age	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	P
Integrating	25 and below	4,04 a	0,70	3,977	0,008**
	26-35	4,20 b	0,76		
	36-45	4,26 b	0,66		
	46 and above	4,28 b	0,51		
Obliging	25 and below	3,49 a	0,79	7,090	0,000***
	26-35	3,69 b	0,76		
	36-45	3,78 b	0,75		
	46 and above	3,45 a	0,81		
Dominating	25 and below	3,53 a	0,85	2,545	0,055
	26-35	3,64 a	0,82		
	36-45	3,71 a	0,86		
	46 and above	3,49 a	0,82		
Avoiding	25 and below	3,55 a	0,88	1,898	0,128
	26-35	3,54 a	1,01		
	36-45	3,55 a	1,05		
	46 and above	3,24 a	1,26		
Compromising	25 and below	3,92 a	0,73	2,526	0,056
	26-35	4,04 a	0,76		
	36-45	4,11 a	0,77		
	46 and above	4,09 a	0,69		

***p<0,001 **p<0,01 ^{a,b}The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

The one-factor variance analysis shown in Table 8 demonstrates a significant difference for all types of enterprises ($p < 0,05$). The analysis of mean values shows that the managers of three-star hotels are less likely to use the integrating and compromising methods of conflict management compared to other groups. The managers of (A) group travel agencies are more likely to choose the integrating method, whereas the managers of the four-star hotels opt for compromising methods. Obliging and dominating methods are preferred by the managers of five-star hotels, (A) group travel agencies, and four and three-star hotels, respectively. Although the mean values for the (A) group travel agencies and the five-star hotel managers are more likely to use the avoiding method, while three-star hotels are less likely to use this method. Research has found that the managers of the (A) group travel agencies and the five-star hotels are more likely to use the obliging, dominating, and the avoiding methods, compared to the other groups.

The results of the one-factor variance analysis in Table 9 show a significant difference between the conflict management methods of managers and geographical regions of hotels at which managers work ($p < 0,05$).

Looking at the mean values, the integrating and the compromising methods have been used the least by the managers that work in southeastern Anatolian Region and the dominating, obliging and the avoiding methods have been used least by managers in the Eastern Anatolia Region. Additionally, the findings reveal that the managers working in the Aegean Region are likely to use all conflict management methods more than the rest of the managers.

One-factor variance analysis in Table 10 shows a significant difference between the conflict management methods and the status of the enterprises ($p < 0,05$). The table also shows that the integrating method has been less frequently used by managers working at foreign franchise firms, while obliging, dominating and avoiding methods are less preferred by the managers of domestic franchise firms. The compromising method is less used by the managers of domestic independent firms. The average values show that the managers of foreign independent enterprises use the conflict management methods less than the other managers.

Table 5. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Education Level of Participants

Conflict Management Methods	Education Level	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	p
Integrating	Primary School	3,99 a	0,71	3,746	0,005**
	High School	4,09 a	0,69		
	Associate	4,27 b	0,74		
	Undergraduate	4,23 b	0,70		
	Graduate	3,97 a	0,60		
Obliging	Primary School	3,23 a	0,69	6,650	0,000***
	High School	3,57 b	0,79		
	Associate	3,79 c	0,78		
	Undergraduate	3,57 b	0,75		
	Graduate	3,52 b	0,54		
Dominating	Primary School	3,35 a	0,73	3,704	0,005**
	High School	3,63 b c	0,83		
	Associate	3,75 c	0,84		
	Undergraduate	3,55 b	0,84		
	Graduate	3,52 b	0,85		
Avoiding	Primary School	3,04 a	1,10	4,914	0,000***
	High School	3,55 b c	1,00		
	Associate	3,67 b	0,99		
	Undergraduate	3,41 c	1,05		
	Graduate	3,27 d	0,86		
Compromising	Primary School	3,87 a	0,91	1,598	0,173
	High School	4,03 a	0,75		
	Associate	4,05 a	0,77		
	Undergraduate	4,08 a	0,73		
	Graduate	3,98 a	0,74		

*** $p < 0,001$ ** $p < 0,01$ ^{a, b, c, d} The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

Table 6. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Administrative Experience of Participants

Conflict Management Methods	Administrative experience	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	p
Integrating	Less than 5 years	4,24 a	0,70	3,170	0,024**
	5-9 Years	4,10 b	0,76		
	10-14 Years	4,07 b	0,67		
	15 Years and above	4,25 a	0,49		
Obliging	Less than 5 years	3,74 a	0,77	12,958	0,000***
	5-9 Years	3,45 b	0,76		
	10-14 Years	3,41 b	0,62		
	15 Years and above	3,39 b	0,73		
Dominating	Less than 5 years	3,73 a	0,84	11,098	0,000***
	5-9 Years	3,49 b	0,85		
	10-14 Years	3,40 b	0,76		
	15 Years and above	3,22 c	0,61		
Avoiding	Less than 5 years	3,68 a	0,97	23,141	0,000***
	5-9 Years	3,31 b	1,03		
	10-14 Years	3,18 c	1,09		
	15 Years and above	2,64 d	1,09		
Compromising	Less than 5 years	4,09 a	0,76	3,022	0,029**
	5-9 Years	3,96 b	0,75		
	10-14 Years	3,87 c	0,77		
	15 Years and above	4,09 a	0,58		

*** $p < 0,001$ ** $p < 0,01$ ^{a, b, c, d} The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

Table 7. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Administrative Status of Participants

Conflict Management Methods	Administrative Status	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	p
Integrating	Director general or deputy director general	4,20 a	0,69	5,473	0,004**
	Department manager or deputy department manager	4,31 b	0,69		
	Chief or deputy chief	4,14 a	0,73		
Obliging	Director general or deputy director general	3,44 a	0,74	16,348	0,000**
	Department manager or deputy department manager	3,81 b	0,75		
	Chief or deputy chief	3,64 c	0,78		
Dominating	Director general or deputy director general	3,56 a	0,82	3,095	0,046*
	Department manager or deputy department manager	3,73 b	0,85		
	Chief or deputy chief	3,62 a	0,84		
Avoiding	Director general or deputy director general	3,34 a	1,11	5,053	0,007**
	Department manager or deputy department manager	3,59 b	1,03		
	Chief or deputy chief	3,57 b	0,98		
Compromising	Director general or deputy director general	4,09 a	0,74	0,609	0,544
	Department manager or deputy department manager	4,05 a	0,80		
	Chief or deputy chief	4,02 a	0,73		

*** $p < 0,001$ ** $p < 0,01$ * $p < 0,05$ ^{a, b, c} The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

Table 8. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Type of Enterprises

Conflict Management Methods	Type of Enterprise	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	p
Integrating	(A) group travel agency	4,27 a	0,70	3,609	0,013*
	Five- star hotel	4,18 a	0,72		
	Four- star hotel	4,24 a	0,73		
	Three- star hotel	4,08 b	0,70		
Obliging	(A) group travel agency	3,80 a	0,72	27,106	0,000***
	Five- star hotel	3,82 a	0,82		
	Four- star hotel	3,61 b	0,76		
	Three- star hotel	3,30 c	0,70		
Dominating	(A) group travel agency	3,74 a	0,80	14,189	0,000***
	Five- star hotel	3,82 a	0,86		
	Four- star hotel	3,60 b	0,84		
	Three- star hotel	3,37 c	0,81		
Avoiding	(A) group travel agency	3,68 a	0,97	13,018	0,000***
	Five- star hotel	3,64 a	1,05		
	Four- star hotel	3,55 b	1,07		
	Three- star hotel	3,19 c	0,93		
Compromising	(A) group travel agency	4,04 a	0,75	10,382	0,000***
	Five- star hotel	4,12 a b	0,79		
	Four- star hotel	4,18 b	0,74		
	Three- star hotel	3,83 c	0,71		

*** $p < 0,001$ * $p < 0,05$ ^{a, b, c} The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

Table 9. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Geographical Regions

Conflict Management Methods	Geographical Region	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	p
Integrating	Marmara Region	4,20 a	0,71	9,102	0,000***
	Central Anatolia Region	4,08 b	0,68		
	Black Sea Region	4,13 a b	0,67		
	Aegean Region	4,35 c	0,68		
	Mediterranean Region	4,22 a	0,76		
	Eastern Anatolia Region	4,29 a	0,34		
	Southeastern Anatolia Region	3,60 d	0,74		
Obliging	Marmara Region	3,57 a	0,78	35,949	0,000***
	Central Anatolia Region	3,39 b	0,71		
	Black Sea Region	3,23 c	0,55		
	Aegean Region	4,00 d	0,66		
	Mediterranean Region	3,81 e	0,80		
	Eastern Anatolia Region	2,94 f	0,71		
	Southeastern Anatolia Region	3,02 f	0,62		
Dominating	Marmara Region	3,64 a	0,86	22,519	0,000***
	Central Anatolia Region	3,42 b	0,83		
	Black Sea Region	3,15 c	0,74		
	Aegean Region	3,94 d	0,76		
	Mediterranean Region	3,78 e	0,79		
	Eastern Anatolia Region	3,06 f	0,87		
	Southeastern Anatolia Region	3,22 c	0,75		
Avoiding	Marmara Region	3,33 a	1,08	27,373	0,000***
	Central Anatolia Region	3,16 b	1,07		
	Black Sea Region	3,22 a b	0,80		
	Aegean Region	3,96 c	0,89		
	Mediterranean Region	3,75 d	0,95		
	Eastern Anatolia Region	2,81 e	0,94		
	Southeastern Anatolia Region	2,82 e	0,81		
Compromising	Marmara Region	4,07 a	0,68	7,923	0,000***
	Central Anatolia Region	3,98 a	0,72		
	Black Sea Region	3,86 b	0,72		
	Aegean Region	4,21 c	0,73		
	Mediterranean Region	4,05 a	0,82		
	Eastern Anatolia Region	3,98 a	0,68		
	Southeastern Anatolia Region	3,50 d	0,83		

*** $p < 0,001$ ^{a, b, c, d, e, f} The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

Table 10. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Status of the Enterprises

Conflict Management Methods	Status of the Enterprise	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	p
Integrating	Domestic Independent	4,17 a c	0,71	2,849	0,036*
	Foreign Independent	4,31 b	0,71		
	Domestic Franchise	4,22 c	0,62		
	Foreign Franchise	4,11 a	0,76		
Obliging	Domestic Independent	3,53 a	0,74	23,686	0,000***
	Foreign Independent	3,97 b	0,75		
	Domestic Franchise	3,43 c	0,73		
	Foreign Franchise	3,72 d	0,79		
Dominating	Domestic Independent	3,48 a	0,84	30,059	0,000***
	Foreign Independent	4,01 b	0,77		
	Domestic Franchise	3,46 a	0,81		
	Foreign Franchise	3,86 c	0,69		
Avoiding	Domestic Independent	3,34 a	1,01	34,349	0,000***
	Foreign Independent	3,98 b	0,90		
	Domestic Franchise	3,17 c	1,01		
	Foreign Franchise	3,80 d	0,94		
Compromising	Domestic Independent	3,95 a	0,72	13,040	0,000***
	Foreign Independent	4,29 b	0,79		
	Domestic Franchise	3,98 a	0,75		
	Foreign Franchise	4,11 c	0,77		

*** $p < 0,001$ * $p < 0,05$ ^{a, b, c, d} The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

Table 11. Differences between Conflict Management Methods and Operating Period of the Enterprises

Conflict Management Methods	Operating Period	\bar{X}	s.d.	F	p
Integrating	Less than 5 years	4,17 a	0,74	0,320	0,811
	5-9 years	4,20 a	0,75		
	10-14 years	4,22 a	0,66		
	15 years and above	4,23 a	0,65		
Obliging	Less than 5 years	3,64 a	0,76	23,616	0,000***
	5-9 years	3,83 b	0,77		
	10-14 years	3,59 a	0,70		
	15 years and above	3,29 c	0,73		
Dominating	Less than 5 years	3,55 a	0,91	28,527	0,000***
	5-9 years	3,89 b	0,74		
	10-14 years	3,59 a	0,84		
	15 years and above	3,27 c	0,79		
Avoiding	Less than 5 years	3,65 a	0,94	34,776	0,000***
	5-9 years	3,76 b	0,92		
	10-14 years	3,49 c	1,07		
	15 years and above	2,92 d	1,03		
Compromising	Less than 5 years	3,96 a	0,76	2,657	0,047*
	5-9 years	4,11 b	0,79		
	10-14 years	4,08 b	0,68		
	15 years and above	3,98 a	0,73		

*** $p < 0,001$ * $p < 0,05$ ^{a, b, c, d} The difference between the groups that involve different letters for each method is significant.

The results of the one-factor variance analysis in Table 11 show a significant difference between the conflict management methods and the operating period of the enterprises at which managers work ($p < 0,05$), with the exception of the integrating method ($p = 0,811$; $p > 0,05$).

Conclusion and Discussion

This research, which evaluates the conflict management methods employed by managers of tourism enterprises, has found that managers are most likely to opt for the integrating, compromising, obliging, dominating and avoiding methods, respectively. The use of the integrating method, which is the most effective method of conflict management (Rahim, 2004), indicates the adaptation of a positive approach by managers during times of conflict. The reluctance of the managers to adopt the avoidance method, which involves negative behaviors such as retreat, non-involvement, indifference, and which leads to loss for the conflicting sides, reflects the consistency and the knowledgeable-ness of managers during the management of the conflicts.

This research has also analyzed the influence of personal characteristics of the managers and the characteristics of enterprises over the selection of conflict management methods. The results of the difference analysis conducted to find the relationship between the personal characteristics of the managers (age, gender, and education levels) and the conflict management methods employed showed significant difference in employing the obliging, dominating, and avoiding methods. Female managers hold the obliging, dominating, and the avoiding methods in higher regard than male managers. This finding reveals that female managers are more likely to use their authority, to be indifferent to the conflicts, or to be calm and not upset the conflicting parties. Besides, this research has also found that both female and the male managers are likely to use the methods of integrating and compromising. This finding is parallel to the studies of Özmen (1997), Sirivun (2001), Niederauer (2006), Şirin (2008), and Kırçan (2009).

Analyzing the differences between the ages of managers and their conflict management methods shows significant differences when employing the integrating and the obliging methods. The participants have positive responses for the integrating method as they get older. This finding shows that the experienced managers are likely to solve the interpersonal problems in a more rational way. Regarding the obliging method, the managers above 46 and below 25 do not make conces-

sions. This finding reveals that the managers in these age groups are more likely to prioritize their interests and use their administrative authorities over the subordinates.

We have also found significant differences between managers' education levels and their employment of the integrating, obliging, dominating, and avoiding methods. These methods have been frequently used by managers with associate degrees, and least used by primary school graduates. This reflects that primary school graduates do not have sufficient knowledge of conflict management methods and do not use these methods deliberately. On the other hand, managers with associate degrees use the integrating method in a rational way. However, since these managers have positive feelings on the obliging, dominating and, avoiding methods, we may argue that they have some improper tendencies when managing conflicts.

This research has also dealt with the results of the difference analysis related with the positions of the tourism enterprise managers (experience and administrative status) in the tourism sector. When comparing the conflict management method according to the managers' experiences we discovered that the integrating and compromising methods are mostly used by the managers with less than five years or more than 15 years of experience. These results indicate that these managers are more likely to pay attention to the conflicting sides' opinions and to search for a middle way. Additionally, managers with more than 15 years of professional experience are reluctant to employ the avoiding, dominating, and obliging methods. This shows that experienced managers are more likely to manage the conflicts in a professional way and to recognize and solve the problems rather than ignoring them. The above average employment of the obliging, dominating, and avoiding methods by the managers with less than 5 years of experience may be related with their lack of professional experience, the absence of prior experiences dealing with the specific conflicts, or with these managers' tendencies to rely on temporary solutions such as ignoring, making concessions, or suppression. The findings are parallel to the findings of the Niederauer's (2006) study.

This study also dealt with the differences between the administrative positions of the managers and their preferences when employing conflict management methods. The analysis shows that the department managers and the deputy department managers opt for the integrating, obliging, and avoiding methods. On the other hand, since the managers holding these positions

also prefer the dominating method, one may conclude that they adopt both the benign and the dominating administrative styles. The reluctance of director generals and the deputy director generals to employ the avoiding and the obliging methods indicates that top managers deal with the conflicts in a proper way. Finally, the hesitancy of the chiefs and deputy chiefs to use the integrating method reflects the professional inexperience and lack of knowledge of the junior managers.

The results of the difference analysis according to the characteristics of the tourism enterprise (type, location, status, operating period) shows that the managers of three-star hotels use all conflict management methods the least, while (A) group travel agencies prefer integrating and avoiding methods, the managers of five-star hotels employ obliging and dominating methods, and managers of four-star hotels use the compromising methods. These findings show that the managers of the five-star hotels adopt a generous, beneficent, and self-sacrificing approach in addition to using their authority during conflict management processes. On the other hand, the managers working in (A) group travel agencies have a participatory approach and are likely to listen to the conflicting sides, exchange information, and place more emphasis on problem-solving. However, they are also likely to intervene late, postpone the solutions, or indirectly deal with the conflicts. Although the compromising method is mostly preferred by the managers of the four-star hotels, the managers of the (A) group travel agencies and the five-star hotels use this method as well. Hence, one might claim that the managers of the (A) group travel agencies adopt more positive conflict management methods compared to the hotel managers generally. The comparison of the conflict management methods according to the geographical locations of the tourism enterprises shows that managers working in the Aegean region provide positive responses to all conflict management methods. On the other hand, managers working in southeastern Anatolian region have the most negative responses to the integrating and compromising methods, and those in eastern Anatolian region have the most negative responses to the obliging, dominating and the avoiding methods. In other words, managers working in the tourism enterprises located in the Aegean Region emphasize sacrifice and cooperation in order to manage conflicts, while those in the southeastern Anatolian region do not attach importance to these values.

Additionally, methods such as paying attention to the other side's demands, postponement, the neglect of conflicts, and the perspective that the dominance and the gains of the manager is essential for the conflict

management are highly valued by the managers working in Aegean Region whereas those in eastern Anatolian region do not pay attention to them.

This comparison of the conflict management methods according to the status of the tourism enterprises shows that all types of methods are used by managers of foreign independent firms. These managers' positive evaluations on the integrating, obliging, and compromising methods indicate that managers of the foreign independent enterprises handle conflicts in a proper way. However, the use of the dominating and the avoiding methods by the same managers signals problems with conflict management. On the other hand, managers working at domestic franchise firms are reluctant to use the obliging, dominating, and avoiding methods compared to managers in other firms. This signals that the managers of the domestic franchise firms adopt the proper approach to manage the conflicts.

The comparison of the conflict management methods based on operating periods shows significant differences when employing conflict resolution methods with the exception of the integrating method. The obliging, dominating, and avoiding methods are preferred by managers working in tourism enterprises with an operating period of 5-9 years. They are not preferred in tourism enterprises with an operating period of more than 15 years. This result may indicate a tendency for managers of tourism enterprises with an operating period of more than 15 years to prioritize the demands of the others, to emphasize organizational efficiency, and to deal with the conflicts more urgently because of organizational structures. However, the fact that these methods are mostly preferred by the managers of the enterprises with an operating period of 5-9 years shows that they tend to react to solve problems urgently and establish their administrative authority. They may also make concessions under unexpected conditions. This finding is verified by the fact that managers provided positive evaluations of the compromising method. However, we should recall that the practice of the compromising method may end up producing complex problems and be inadequate to resolving the conflicts (Rahim, 2002).

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