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The Relationship Between Teachers' Negativism and School Principals' Approaches to Eliminating Resistance to Change¹

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers who show negativism and the approaches used by school principals to eliminate resistance to change. The study was carried out with a research group consisting of 390 teachers working in Bağcılar district of Istanbul. Organizational Passive Aggressive Behaviors Scale and School Principals' Approaches to Eliminating Resistance to Change in Schools Scale were used. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistical analysis and correlation analysis were performed. As a result of the analysis of the data, it was seen that there is a significant relationship between the perception of negativism and school principals' approaches to eliminating resistance to change, and that teachers' levels of negativism have an effect on the perception of approaches to eliminating resistance to change. When we examine it in terms of dimensions, it is found that the level of negativism affects the perception of pressure and force positively and significantly; communication, participation and involvement, and education perception dimensions were found to affect negatively and significantly.

Keywords: Organizational passive aggressive behavior; negativism; resistance to change

Öğretmenlerin Negativizmi ile Okul Müdürlerinin Değişime Direnişi Giderme Yaklaşımları Arasındaki İlişki

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı negativizm davranışı gösteren öğretmenlerle okul müdürlerinin değişime direnişi gidermek için kullandıkları yaklaşımları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek üzere kurulmuştur. Çalışma İstanbul'un Bağcılar ilçesinde görev yapan 390 öğretmenden oluşan araştırma grubu ile yapılmıştır. Örgütsel Pasif Agresif Davranışlar Ölçeği ve Okul Müdürlerinin Okullarda Değişime Karşı Direnişleri Giderme Yaklaşımları Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde, betimsel istatistik analizi ve korelasyon analizi yapılmıştır. Verilerin analizi sonucunda, negativizm ile okul müdürlerinin değişime karşı direnişleri giderme yaklaşımları algısı arasında anlamlı bir ilişkinin olduğu ve öğretmenlerin negativizm düzeylerinin değişime karşı direnişi giderme yaklaşımları algısı üzerinde etkisi olduğu görülmüştür. Boyutlar bağlamında incelediğimizde ise negativizm düzeyinin baskı ve zor kullanma algısı boyutunu pozitif ve anlamlı etkilediği; iletişim, katılım ve yer alma,

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eđitim algısı boyutlarını ise negatif ve anlamlı etkilediđi görölmüştür.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Örgütsel pasif agresif davranış; negativizm; deđişime direniş

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are defined as a system of consciously coordinated activities of two or more people and systems of people in communication who come together for a common purpose (Barnard, 1994). In organizations, activities are carried out within the hierarchy of responsibility towards authority by sharing jobs (Schein, 1970). In another definition, organizations consist of relationships between individuals (Marc & Simon, 1958). The organization shows the efforts of individuals to come together for a purpose and to engage in activities that will achieve that purpose in communication with each other. In order for the goals of the organization to be realized, the superior must have the power to rule over the subordinates, and the subordinate must accept to be dominated by the superior (Erdoğan, 2002, p. 87). Changing technological, economic, social and political structures have made it necessary to change the organization. It is challenging for organizations to keep up with this change. Organizations that can't keep up with change are doomed to disappear. In order for change to be possible, everyone must believe that it will happen, because people's satisfaction with current conditions, their fear of innovations and loss of power cause them to resist change (Gonçalves, 2012).

Personal characteristics are among the reasons for resistance to change. The people who make up the organization must first believe in the necessity of change in order to realize the change. They should be informed about how the change will happen. People must be protected by the leader (Erdoğan, 2021). It will be insufficient for the leader to use only one method in order to realize the resistance to change in the direction. Organizational leaders may need to overuse some methods during this time to deal with resistance to change. Some of the approaches used to deal with resistance to change include (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2011): Education, communication, participation and involvement, support, developing positive relationships, manipulation and cooptation, internal relations, selection of people who accept change and coercion. In educational organizations, it is essential that school principals, as leaders, determine the change policies of the organization, anticipate the obstacles that may arise and develop some approaches to overcome these obstacles. In this context, school principals use approaches such as pressure and use of force, communication, education, participation and involvement in order to eliminate resistance to change (Yelken, 2012).

School principals make some requests from teachers with the approaches they use to eliminate resistance to change. In line with these demands, teachers are assigned various roles in order to ensure change and eliminate resistance to change. While these roles imposed on teachers cause them to feel under pressure from time to time, this situation also leads to anger behaviors of teachers (Demirkasımođlu, 2007, p. 13). In addition, the expectations of the society and their supervisors can cause anger in teachers (Bakiođlu, 1998). The teacher, who feels anger towards the authority, avoids showing this anger directly due to the authority and responsibility created by the subordinate relationship. However, this anger situation comes out somehow and affects people and the organization. Anger behaviors that are not shown directly are generalized as passive-aggressive behaviors. The built-in thought that people with passive-aggressive behavior have is the thought of "it might come on me". People show resistance behavior in order to cope with this thought (Ertuđrul & Bayraktar, 2010). Resistance behavior is used synonymously with resistance power. Sub-dimensions of passive aggressive behaviors are verbal aggression, defiance and negativism. Verbal aggression and defiance are seen as defense mechanisms. Negativism is the tendency to view people and events in a persistently negative way. People with this tendency have various roles in which they display their negativity and pessimistic outlook on life (Millon, 1981). These people feel dissatisfied with their lives, show resentment at the suggestion of how to do something, talk about how hard life is and that things never go the way they want. They do not see themselves as the cause of their problems. These behaviors also prevent people's business interactions to a great extent (Katz, 1992). Negativist people perceive any job they want to do or an innovation that will benefit the organization as a threat to them, and as a result of these perceptions, they harm both individuals and organizations with their behaviors (Thomson, 2013). Therefore, they stand as a major obstacle to the achievement of the approaches used to eliminate resistance in schools, both because they constitute the source of resistance to change and because of their negative perceptions.

Frederick W. Taylor (1895) presented his work, *Principles of Scientific Management*, on problematic behaviors that consciously slow down production in organizations. He produced a theory that analyzes and synthesizes the

workflow in organizations with Taylorism theory. Vardi and Weitz (2004), in their experimental study on the examination and understanding of organizational behaviors, looked at organizational misbehaviors at a broad level that prevent them from reaching the desired goals in organizations. In order to better understand the behavior of people in organizations, it is necessary to discover the wrong behaviors. Vardi and Weitz drew the framework of organizational misbehavior in their study. In this context, they included examples of organizational misbehaviors and finally made methodological inferences. Thus, it provides a comprehensive and systematic framework for the management of undesirable behaviors in organizations. Thomson (2013) collected organizational misbehaviors on a model in his study in 2013. He established a theoretical model that defines organizational misbehavior as organizational passive-aggressive behavior. Thomson (2013) provided the understanding of organizational passive-aggressive behaviors with his study. This research is based on the behavior of negativism, which is one of the sub-dimensions of organizational passive-aggressive behavior, based on the model drawn by Thomson. Teachers who show negativism behavior are the source of resistance to change in the organization due to their negative mindset. Among the methods used to eliminate organizational resistance, positive and constructive approaches such as education, communication, participation and involvement will be less, and negative approaches such as pressure and force will be perceived more and will prevent change. Correct perception of the approaches used by school principals to eliminate resistance to change will facilitate the elimination of resistance to change in schools. It will help teachers who show negativistic behavior to change the direction of their negative perspective, so that the teacher will distance themselves from the feeling of pressure and use of force. The negativist teacher, who changes the direction of his negative thinking, will keep up with the change without feeling under pressure and force. This will benefit teachers' personal development and professional satisfaction. He will feel a sense of belonging to the school and will keep up with the innovations requested from him. In this case, school principals will solve the problems in a more economical way by applying the resistance to change approaches correctly. The time and effort spent on approaches that are used unnecessarily and that do not reach the negativist teacher will be used for more beneficial approaches. In this way, change in schools will take place in the desired way and at the desired time. Social, economic, technological, cultural etc. according to the needs of the period. The development of schools that keep up with the changes will be provided more easily.

Before this study, studies were conducted in the fields of psychology, social psychology and organizational psychology to examine the behaviors of negativism. In this study, teachers' negativism behaviors were examined with the Organizational Passive Aggressive Behavior Scale adapted to Turkish by Şat (2018). A study examining teachers' negativism behaviors has not been conducted in our country. Negativism behaviors of teachers will be examined and their negative effects in schools will be examined and thus will provide information to school principals on how to deal with negativism behaviors.

As a result of the study, school principals and teachers will easily adapt to the innovations that are expected to take place in accordance with the national education policies, and it will help teachers who show negativistic behaviors to perceive the approaches used by school principals to eliminate resistance to change.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

In this study, it is aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' negativism and perceptions of school principals' approaches to eliminating resistance to change. In order to achieve the aim of the research, the following hypotheses were tested.

1. There is a positive relationship between teachers' negativism and the "pressure and use of force" sub-dimension, which is one of the school principals' approaches to eliminating resistance to change according to teacher perceptions.
2. There is a negative relationship between teachers' negativism and the "communication" sub-dimension, which is one of the approaches of school principals to eliminate resistance to change according to teacher perceptions.
3. There is a negative relationship between teachers' negativism and the "participation and involvement" sub-dimension, which is one of the approaches of school principals to eliminate resistance to change according to teacher perceptions.

4. There is a negative relationship between teachers' negativism and the "education" sub-dimension, which is one of the approaches of school principals to eliminate resistance to change according to teacher perceptions.

2. METHOD

In this section, information about the research model, study group, data collection tools, data collection and analysis will be given.

2.1. Research Model

In the study, the relationship between teachers' negativism and school principals' approaches to eliminating resistance to change was predicted according to teacher perceptions. Quantitative research method was used in the research. The method of the research was determined as "relational screening model". Relational screening model is used to determine the relationship between variables and to predict their results. It is done to determine the relationship between two or more variables (Crano & Brewer, 2002). In the study, the relations between the negativism of the independent variable and the dependent variables, the pressure and use of force, communication, education and participation and involvement, which are among the approaches of school principals to eliminate resistance to change, were examined according to the perceptions of the teachers.

2.2. Study Grup

The study group of the study consists of primary school teachers working in educational institutions in Istanbul province Bağcılar district. There are 144 schools/institutions in the district and 2483 teachers are employed in these schools. Yazicioglu and Erdogan (2004), who performed the calculation of sample sizes at different error percentages and confidence levels for universes that will include more than 6000 people, stated that the number of samples would be at least 361 in the 95% confidence interval.

When the distribution of the teachers included in the research sample according to the gender variable is examined, it is seen that 250 (64.1%) are female, 140 (35.9%) are male, and 187 (47.9%) according to the age range are between 20-30 years old. , 134 (34.4%) were between the ages of 31-40, 58 (14.9%) were between the ages of 41-50, and 11 (2.8%) were 51 years or older, with a total of 390 people. is seen. The number of people reached is sufficient for the study.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

In the research, "Organizational Passive Aggressive Behaviors Scale" and "Scale of School Principals' Approaches to Eliminating Resistance to Change in Schools" were used as data collection.

2.3.1. Organizational Passive Aggressive Behaviors Scale

Organizational Passive Aggressive Behaviors scale is a scale prepared by Thomson in 2010. Thomson finalized this work in 2013. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Şat (2018).

The scale consists of 12 items and three sub-dimensions: negativism, verbal aggression and defiance. Four items are negativism (Example Item 1: I do not find the rules and practices of the company I work for correct.), three items are verbal aggression (Example Item 5: When I am angry with someone, I speak sarcastically and scribble at every opportunity.), five (5) items defiance (Example 12 Item: I spread rumors about people I don't like.) measures their size. The scale is 7-point Likert type. It started with 1 "Strongly Agree" and was graded as 7 "Strongly Disagree" (Şat, 2018).

2.3.2. Scale of School Principals' Approaches to Eliminating Resistance to Change in Schools

The "Scale of School Principals' Approaches to Eliminating Resistance to Change in Schools" developed by Yelken in 2012 was used. The scale consists of 32 items in total and four sub-dimensions: pressure and use of force, communication, participation and involvement, and education.

Pressure and use of force consists of 10 items (Example Item 1: Uses a punishment mechanism against teachers who resist change when there are some changes in the school), communication consists of 11 items (Example 11: Listens to teachers who have difficulty in keeping up with the innovations in the education system and tries to solve their problems. education consists of four items (Example 22: Guidance for teachers who cannot adapt to change in school to reduce the possibility of resistance to change). it.) consists of. The scale was prepared in

a 5-point Likert format. The answers given are calculated by scoring 1 “I totally disagree”, 5 “I totally agree”. A score between 32 and 160 points can be obtained on the scale (Yelken, 2021).

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Today, applications of scales can be made over the internet with technological communication tools (Burns, 2019). Necessary permission was obtained from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education for the collection of data. In particular, since the Covid 19 pandemic continues around the world, the scales were delivered to them online, by contacting the teachers one-on-one for the collection of data. As a result of the permission obtained, teachers in Bağcılar district of Istanbul answered the online questionnaires. In total, data collected from 390 teachers were analyzed. In the analysis of the study data, respectively; normality tests, descriptive statistical analysis to determine the descriptive statistics of the measurement tools, correlation analysis to determine the relationships between the variables.

2.5. Scientific Research and Publication Ethics

In the study, all the rules specified to be followed by the "*Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive*" were complied with. None of the actions specified in the 2nd part of the Directive, titled "*Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics*", were carried out.

2.5.1. Ethics Committee Approval

Before collecting data, Ethics Committee approvals were obtained from Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University Ethics Committee, and participants' consent forms were gathered with signature.

Committee Name = Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

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3. RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between teachers' negativism and the "pressure and use of force" sub-dimension, which is one of the school principals' approaches to eliminating resistance to change, according to teacher perceptions.

According to the results of the analysis, there is a statistically significant positive relationship ($r=0.543$; $p<0.001$) between negativism and using pressure and force. As teachers' negativism increases, they perceive school principals' approach of using pressure and force to overcome resistance to change. Negative thoughts that cannot be expressed directly are the basis of passive-aggressive behaviors. These behaviors are passive inhibitory behaviors. Since these people cannot express their feelings directly, they express their anger more passively. These people are manipulative, they try to make themselves dependent on others. The basis of aggression in organizations is that subordinates think that they are treated unfairly by their superiors. These thoughts cause teachers who show negative behaviors to perceive negative behaviors more. When the school principal chose the approach of using pressure and force to prevent resistance to change, it caused it to be perceived more. For this reason, it is seen that the negativist teacher perceives the pressure and force used in resistance to change excessively.

Hypothesis 2: There is a negative relationship between teachers' negativism and the "communication" sub-dimension, which is one of the approaches of school principals to eliminate resistance to change according to teacher perceptions.

According to the results of the analysis, there is a statistically significant negative ($r=-0.439$; $p<0.001$) relationship between negativism and communication. As teachers' negativism increases, they perceive the communication approach of school principals less to eliminate resistance to change. Effective communication is very important in the realization of change in organizations. It is not possible to progress in organizations without effective communication. Elements of effective communication; sender, receiver, message, channel, context, and feedback. In effective communication, the sender has to consider the perception of the receiver while sending the message. For this reason, effective communication is possible if the school principal conveys the message he wants to convey to the teacher clearly and in a short time, and the teacher perceives this

message correctly. The main thing is that the source expresses himself correctly to the receiver and the receiver to the source. In effective communication, it is not right to put all the responsibility on the source and the message. In effective communication, the receiver is an active element. Here, the receiver is expected to perceive the message correctly and focus on the message. However, teachers with negativism behavior focus on the source rather than the message. When the source is the school principal, who is above the teacher, the negativist teacher perceives this as a threat to himself and does not see the message. This situation negatively affects the communication process. Considering the findings obtained from the study, the fact that the recipient is a negativist teacher creates an obstacle to effective communication. When the negativist teacher focuses on the source rather than the message, the school principal does not perceive the communication correctly. In the study, it is seen that the negative view of the negativist teacher and his focus on the source rather than the message, that is, the school principal, cause him to perceive the communication approach used to eliminate resistance to change less.

Hypothesis 3: There is a negative relationship between teachers' negativism and the sub-dimension of "participation and involvement", which is one of the approaches of school principals to eliminate resistance to change, according to teacher perceptions.

According to the results of the analysis, there is a statistically significant negative ($r=-0.460$; $p<0.001$) relationship between negativism and participation and involvement scores. As teachers' negativism increases, they perceive less the school principals' approach to participation and involvement in eliminating resistance to change. To bring about change, teachers need to be involved in implementation and planning. Planning should be done taking into account the interests and needs of teachers, and they should be allowed to express their opinions. They should be convinced that their adaptation to innovations will increase success. It should provide trust and support to the teacher. All of these are the responsibilities of teachers. Since these responsibilities may bring the teacher face to face with the school principal when appropriate, the negativist teacher avoids responsibility. In this case, the negativist teacher perceives participation and involvement less because he is afraid to avoid the responsibility of participation and involvement and to express his ideas openly. The study findings also support this. It is seen that as negativism increases, participation and involvement decreases.

Hypothesis 4: There is a negative relationship between teachers' negativism and the "education" sub-dimension, which is one of the approaches of school principals to eliminate resistance to change according to teacher perceptions.

According to the results of the analysis, there is a statistically significant relationship between negativism and education in the negative direction ($r=-0.297$; $p<0.001$). As teachers' negativism increases, school principals become more inclined to eliminate resistance to change.

Table 1. Correlation Results Between Scores From Measurement Tools

	Negativism Score	Pressure and Coercion Score	Communication Score	Participation and Involvement Score	Education Score
Negativism	1	0,543***	-0,439***	-0,460***	-0,297***
Pressure and Coercion		1	-0,523***	-0,572***	-0,422***
Communication			1	0,858***	0,761***
Participation and Involvement				1	0,756***
Education					1

*** $p<0,001$

Table 1 shows the findings related to the correlation results between teachers' negativism and the methods of eliminating resistance to change according to teacher perceptions, pressure and coercion, communication, participation and involvement and education. According to Table 1, there was a positive correlation between negativism and pressure and coercion; communication, participation and involvement and education are negatively correlated with negativism.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1. Discussion

In today's developing changing structure, the change of organizations has also become necessary. Organizations have to keep up with changing conditions in order to continue their lives and achieve their goals. All reactions to prevent the change of the organization are shown as resistance (Lewin, 1952). These reactions may be in the form of open opposition to new targets or in the form of covert resistance (Clark & Koonce, 1998). These hidden resistance behaviors are called passive-aggressive behaviors. Passive-aggressive behaviors affect the organizational culture negatively and cause it to become unhealthy (Neilson, Pasternack & Van Nuys, 2005). Organization leaders develop a number of approaches to improve organizational culture. However, since passive-aggressive people generally have problems with authority, they resist when they are asked to do something new (Köroğlu & Bayraktar, 2010).

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between negativism and coercion and coercion, communication, participation and involvement, and education. In addition, regression analysis was conducted to examine the moderator role of teachers' perceived leadership styles towards the principal among these variables.

The hypotheses established in this study are given below with the hypothesis numbers in the light of the study findings and studies in the literature.

1. According to the results of the research, if the teachers' levels of negativism are high, the perceptions of pressure and use of force, which are among the approaches used by school principals to eliminate resistance to change, are also high. When compared with the findings of the study conducted by Yelken (2012), teachers working in primary schools perceive pressure and force, which is one of the approaches to eliminating resistance to change, less than teachers who show negativism behavior. The reason for this may be that negativist people tend to look at every event negatively and they perceive every behavior that can be directed to them by their superiors as pressure and difficult user due to their misunderstanding of authority. Hoffman (1994) shows in his study that passive aggressive people make themselves believe that they are constantly being mistreated under normal conditions and that they do not tolerate behaviors controlled by authority.

2. According to the findings of the study, the relationship between negativism and communication is negative. Yelken (2012) shows that according to teacher perceptions, school principals use communication more than other approaches. However, when teachers are negative, they cannot perceive the approach of their superiors who want to communicate with them. Köroğlu and Bayraktar (2010), in their definition of passive aggressive people, state that these people have problems with authority and resist when they are asked to do things that will make them successful. In any case, a teacher with a high score for negativism cannot correctly perceive the constructive approaches used by the school principal to eliminate resistance to change. Considering these definitions, teachers with high negativism will not be able to perceive the school principal correctly due to their negative point of view, even if they want to communicate with them. Communication is very important in reducing the resistance to change in organizations. The lack of communication underlies many basic problems in organizations. It is only possible for employees to be partners in change and to become its advocates with a planned communication (Hussey, 1997).

3. Through involvement, employees embrace change. So much so that the innovation to be made as a result of the involvement of the employees in the decisions on change will ensure that the goals of both the organization and the employees are compatible; It will also serve to eliminate possible conflicts between management and subordinates (Özkan, 2004). Yelken (2012) shows that according to teachers' perceptions, they think that their principals do not participate much in the activities to eliminate resistance to change. State that effective communication can be used to reduce resistance (Çınar, 2000). In both cases, teachers perceive participation and involvement less than the approaches used by school principals in eliminating resistance to change. Aksoy (2005) stated that with participation, change can be implemented better and the process of change can be carried out more healthily by convincing the addressees of the change. Participation motivates members, puts more effort into change work (Helvacı, 2005).

4. One of the effective methods used in eliminating resistance to change in schools is education. In the study, if the teachers are negativists, they think that the school principals do not use the education method to eliminate

the resistance to change. Training and communication, participation, facilitation and support, bargaining and agreement are among the measures that managers should take against employees who resist organizational change (Tanrıöğen 1995). Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) stated that education and communication are effective in eliminating resistance to change. Yelken (2012) shows that according to teacher perceptions, their principals do not use education to eliminate resistance in their attempts to change. In both cases, school principals are not perceived as educators in eliminating resistance.

4.2. Conclusion

The aim of this study; The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between teachers' negativism and school principals' approaches to eliminating resistance to change according to their perceptions.

According to the results of the analysis made in line with the main purpose of the study; Negativism is positively associated with coercion and coercion, and negatively with communication, participation and involvement, and education. Accordingly, as "negativism" increases, "pressure and use of force" increases, and perceptions of communication, participation and involvement, and education decrease, according to teacher perceptions.

4.3. Limitations

The study was limited to the sub-dimension of negativism, one of the organizational passive-aggressive behaviors shown by the teachers. The change of negativism behavior according to demographic variables was ignored.

In the literature, there are different approaches that school principals use to eliminate resistance to change. In this research, the approaches used to eliminate resistance to change, pressure and coercion, communication, education and participation and involvement in the measurement tool were used.

5. DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Scientific Research and Publication Ethics: In the study, all the rules specified to be followed by the "*Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive*" were complied with. None of the actions specified in the 2nd part of the Directive, titled "*Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics*", were carried out.

Ethics Committee Approval:

Committee Name = Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

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