

THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT ON CO-WORKER CLOSE RELATIONSHIP: A POTENTIAL MEDIATOR BETWEEN CONFLICT AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

ÇATIŞMANIN İŞ ARKADAŞLARI ARASINDAKİ YAKIN İLİŞKİYE ETKİLERİ:
ÇATIŞMA VE ÖRGÜT ÇIKTILARI ARASINDA POTANSİYEL BİR ARABULUCU

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Abstract

There are few studies in the literature addressing the interaction between conflict and interpersonal relationship dynamics. Studying this interaction can contribute to the discussion of the outcomes of the conflict. A random sample was drawn from 234 Turkish citizen white collar non-manager employees belonging to nine different professions from SME companies. Consistent with social exchange theory, it has been supposed that when a conflict emerges between co-workers, the norms of social exchange may be undermined, thus the close relationship may be affected negatively. According to the results of multiple linear regression analysis, both of the conflict types affect relational capital. Unexpectedly, analysis revealed that task conflict's effect on relational capital is higher than the relationship conflict's. The moderation analysis revealed that task type doesn't have a moderation role on conflict's effect on relational capital.

Keywords: Relational Capital, Organizational Outcomes, Relationship Conflict, Task Conflict, Social Exchange Theory

Öz

Literatürde çatışma ve kişilerarası ilişki dinamikleri arasındaki etkileşimi ele alan az sayıda çalışma mevcuttur. Bu etkileşimin incelenmesi çatışmanın çıktılarına ilişkin tartışmaya katkıda bulunabilir. Araştırma, KOBİ'lerde çalışan 9 farklı meslekten 234 Türk vatandaşı, yönetici olmayan beyaz yakalı çalışandan kolayda

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seçilen örneklem grubu üzerinde yapılmıştır. Araştırmada sosyal değişim kuramı ile uyumlu olarak, iş arkadaşları arasında bir çatışma ortaya çıktığında, sosyal mübadele normlarının baltalanabileceği, dolayısıyla aralarındaki yakın ilişkinin olumsuz etkilenebileceği ileri sürülmektedir. Çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizinin sonuçlarına göre, iş arkadaşları arasında çıkan görev ve ilişki çatışmalarının ilişki sermayeyi etkilediğine dair kanıtlar mevcuttur. İlginç bir biçimde, elde edilen sonuçlar, görev çatışmasının ilişki sermaye üzerindeki etkisinin, ilişki çatışmasından daha yüksek olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte görev türünün, çatışma türlerinin ilişki sermayesi üzerindeki etkisinde düzenleyici bir etkisi bulunmamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlişki Sermayesi, Örgüt Çıktıları, İlişki Çatışması, Görev Çatışması, Sosyal Değişim Teorisi

1. Introduction

Until the beginning of the 1990s, there was a consensus among researchers that conflict was a negative process related to aggression, violence, ultimately war potential (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003), and low performance (Jehn, 1995, 1994). However, since the early 1990s, the researches have been accelerated that found benefits of conflict outcomes. Evidence provided by recent research has shown that conflict may positively affect team performance (Groff, Baron & Moore, 1983; Jehn, 1995, 1994), innovation (De Clercq, Thongpapanl & Dimov, 2009), and decision making (Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). Especially after the proposal of two major types of conflict (task, relationship), many researchers used this context to explain the positive and negative outcomes of conflict in organizations (Jiang, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2012). However, there are many other researchers who support the view that all kinds of conflicts (except the special cases) cause negative outcomes (De Dreu, 2007; Dijkstra et al., 2005; Frone, 2000). Indeed, there is evidence that conflicts in organizations have negative effects on performance, organizational commitment, physical problems, depression, job satisfaction, stress, turnover intentions, and general well-being (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Dijkstra et al., 2005; Frone, 2000; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999). Therefore, today it is still too early to say that the debate about, the conflict has positive or negative organizational outcomes, is ended (De Dreu, 2007; Jehn et al., 2008; Jiang, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2012; Shaw et al., 2011).

Despite the conflict is related to social process between at least two people (Dijkstra et al., 2005; Jehn et al., 2008) the interaction of conflict with close social relationships have not been adequately researched (Lu & Guo, 2019). However, exploring the relationship between conflict, and close relationships that have effects on organizational outcomes such as performance, learning, innovation (Lau & Cobb, 2010; Rowley, Behrens & Krackhardt, 2000), may provide a new context for discussions on the outcomes of conflict. Relational capital is using to express close relationships, quality of relationships, and strong ties between parties in organizations (Blatt, 2009; Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998; Rowley, Behrens & Krackhardt, 2000). Thus the study is focused to research the effects of conflict types on relational capital.

The social exchange theory is used to explain how individuals get closer to each other and how the close relationship is broken in social structures (Shupe & Sipe, 2007). According to the social exchange theory, a relationship emerges on the basis of reciprocity norm (Ring & Van De Ven, 1994; Shupe & Sipe, 2007), and in organizations, the norm of reciprocity lies in close personal relationships between the parties (Lau & Cobb, 2010). Relational capital is produced and managed with the norms of trust, mutual gain and reciprocity (Rowley, Behrens & Krackhardt, 2000), and conflict has negative effects on trust and exchange norms (Lau & Cobb, 2010). Thus, in the study, the interaction between conflict and relational capital is considered by the context of the social exchange theory.

However, researching the conditions which the impact of the conflict depends on sheds light on the debate about outcomes of the conflict (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003), and some researches have been done to reveal the conditions which affect the conflict outcomes (Dijkstra et al., 2005; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). One condition that is considered to have a moderation effect on the outcomes of the conflict is task type. Generally, the employees who have routine tasks that perform the same and provide predictable results each time, and the employees who have nonroutine tasks that require problem solving and include high levels of uncertainty may differ by their interpretation of conflict (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Jehn, 1995). Employees with routine tasks may perceive conflict as a time-consuming, productivity-lowering, and workflow interrupting obstacle because what they have to do is obvious and conflict is not involved in their routines (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). In contrast, for employees with non-routine tasks that require creativity and decision making, conflict provides information to make better decisions; so conflict can be perceived as beneficial and may satisfy those in conflict (De Clercq, Thongpapanl & Dimov, 2009; Jehn, 1995; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). In this case, the effect of the conflict on the relational capital can be affected by the task type.

The research focuses on how a perceived conflict by an employee affects the perceived relational capital between the co-workers in a business unit. By this research orientation, firstly the research aims to provide an explanation for confusing results about task and relationship conflict outcomes by proposing a new mediating variable between conflict and its organizational outcomes (Jehn, Rispens & Thatcher, 2010). Secondly, the research tests the impact of conflict types on the relational capital, under the moderation effect of the task type.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange is a concept related to the exchange of tangible and intangible resources between interdependent parties (Lau & Cobb, 2010). According to the social exchange theory, a relationship emerges on the basis of reciprocity (Ring & Van De Ven, 1994; Shupe & Sipe, 2007). Reciprocity turns individuals who have little obligation to others, only self-confident and self-focused individuals, into community members who have a common interest, identity, and benefit (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Reciprocity also solves problems of not being able to move together and connects communities. The parties that perform social exchange know that favor or sinister behavior received in the present creates the expectation that it will be returned in the future (Colquitt, Scott & LePine, 2007). The presence of anti-social behavior or pro-social behavior by one of the parties in the relationship may affect the perception of the other party's equality in their relations, causing the existing relationship to weaken or become closer (Ring & Van de Ven, 1994). Thus, depending on the behavior of the parties, important factors affecting success, such as tolerance, trust, close cooperation, and high satisfaction, develop or decrease with social exchange (Jiang, Li & Gao, 2008). Social exchange leads to more positive interpersonal emotional and cognitive outcomes depending on the production of expected final results over time (Lau & Cobb, 2010), whereas when the expected results are not met, it causes negative emotional and cognitive outcomes between the parties. Therefore, the social exchange approach among individuals tries to clarify the responses given to benefits, costs, and punishments gained in the past as well as benefits, costs, and punishments that will be expected in the future (Lawler, 2001).

2.2. Conflict

Conflict is a process related to perceptions of incompatibility or disagreement about the opinions, beliefs, values, interests or perceptions of reality among the interdependent individuals or groups (Dijkstra et al., 2005). Interpersonal conflict in organizations can be diverse, from small disagreements about task between colleagues to physical attacks about personal issues (Spector & Jex, 1998). Since individuals contribute to organizations through social inputs and task inputs, conflicts in organizations arise in relation with relationship and task problems (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). For this reason, conflicts in organizations are generally researched in two different dimensions; task conflict, and relationship conflict (Amason & Sapienza, 1997; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Jehn, 1995). Although process conflict, which is a unique form of task conflict, has been proposed as a third conflict dimension in recent studies (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Jehn, 1997), mostly task and process problems are examined together under the label of "task conflict" (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Lau & Cobb, 2010; Simons & Peterson, 2000).

Task conflict emerges from the inconsistency in the perspectives and opinions of the parties, while relationship conflict emerges from the personal dissatisfactions of the parties (Amason & Sapienza, 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Task conflict is based on the content of a particular subject and emerges due to differences in the perspectives of parties on this subject (De Clercq, Thongpapanl & Dimov, 2009). Relationship conflicts are related to situations in which individuals think that the person they have a relationship with act in their self-interests or when they feel anxious and uncomfortable in their relationships (Vahtera et al., 2017). Relationship conflicts arise in individuals' relationships, incompatibilities or disagreements involving the tension, animosity and annoyance they personalize, and contain mostly intense negative emotions (Jehn, 1995; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). On the other hand, task conflicts generally lack interpersonal problems that characterize relationship conflict (Jehn, 1994).

Task conflict is less likely to cause negative emotions such as doubt, distrust, and hostility among individuals, which are generally caused by relationship conflict, however, it may encourage the information exchange between the parties and enable the parties to access alternative views through their different perspectives (Amason & Sapienza, 1997). For this reason, while the researchers generally believe that task conflict plays a positive role about conflict outcomes, they think that relationship conflict is negative because of negative feelings and behaviors caused by that (Baron, 1991; De Clercq, Thongpapanl & Dimov, 2009; Finkelstein & Mooney, 2003; Jehn, 1995; 1994). Despite these general views, the understanding of the outcomes of the conflict and knowledge of how to manage it in organizations is limited (De Clercq, Thongpapanl & Dimov, 2009; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003).

2.3. Relational Capital

Relational capital expresses ties established at the level of individual, group or organization, such as close relationships, friendship, and respect (Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998) in situations where the parties have common values, mutual trust, openness, transparency and social ties (Gansinieca, 2016). Relational capital is a concept related to the quality of relationships and strong ties between parties (Blatt, 2009; Rowley, Behrens & Krackhardt, 2000). In the literature, relational embeddedness is also used instead of relational capital (Blatt, 2009). Relational capital focuses on the nature of dyadic, triple relationships rather than focusing on the system of relationships within a network (Gulati, 1998). Relational capital researchers focus on developing long-term cooperative relationships (Uzzi, 1996). Relational capital, which is related to situations in which the parties do not selfishly approach the relationship, has a significant effect in limiting opportunistic behaviors between the parties (Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000) and relational capital provide parties to expect exchange continuity in the relationship (Elfenbein & Zenger, 2014). Thus, relational capital reduces the risk of completely and easily breaking the relationship (Blatt, 2009).

Relational capital in organizations is based on close personal interaction between the parties (Blatt, 2009) and expresses the level of mutual respect and friendship arising from it (Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000). Relational capital between the parties eliminates the need for a formal negotiation process in daily reciprocal transactions so that based on reciprocity norm, the parties carry out their business with much less concern and cognitive effort (Lau & Cobb, 2010).

2.4. Task Type

In an organization, the structure of an organization or the structure of a unit can be defined by task types, which are classified at different levels among fully formed, routine tasks or non-routine tasks which require creativity, decision making and initiative of the employee. Structural frameworks, such as formalization, specialization, centralization, and hierarchy determines the structure of an organization or unit (Rapert & Wren, 1998). Structural frameworks provide guidance in determining who members of the organization interact with while performing their tasks and indicate roles related to particular functions in the organization, parties to particular interactions, and

procedural requirements for communication. For this reason, the structural framework acts as a restraint system that defines appropriate behavior within the organization and reflects the diversity of communication and pattern of diversity within the organization. Therefore, tasks in tightly structured organizations are routine and the need for communication is the least (Damanpour, 1991; Nahm, Vonderembse & Koufteros, 2003). The main focus of more slack-structured organizations is structuring for creativity and innovation (Damanpour, 1991) and the tasks of the organization's members in slack-structured organizations are not routine, making them more flexible in their behaviors (Davis et al., 2009). Competencies, such as horizontal communication, teamwork, and consensus, are more important for slack-structured organizations (Nahm, Vonderembse & Koufteros, 2003).

Defining routine tasks as stable patterns of behavior that determine the organization's responses to internal or external stimuli can be considered as plausible (Peterson & Behfar, 2003; Zollo & Winter, 2002). Routine tasks require relatively low attention, formalized to ensure inputs are converted to expected outputs, they are repetitive and often remain unchanged. Therefore, employees performing routine tasks deal with only a few exceptional cases and problems, and communication and interaction between unit members are limited (Jansen, Van Den Bosch & Volberda, 2005; Peterson & Behfar, 2003). Non-routine tasks require more teamwork, face-to-face interaction, learning, close relationships, and consensus-building efforts (Jansen, Van Den Bosch & Volberda, 2005; Nahm, Vonderembse & Koufteros, 2003). Non-routine tasks presuppose problem-solving ability, lesser procedure, and tackle with a high degree of uncertainty (Jehn, 1995).

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Emotions such as discomfort, tension, frustration, dissatisfaction, anxiety, fear, anger and uneasiness caused by relationship conflict (Amason & Sapienza, 1997; Baron 1991; Jehn, 1994; Spector & Jex, 1998), can bring about reduction in the parties trust and respect (Jehn et al., 2008; Langfred, 2007; Vahtera et al., 2017), cause them to feel threatened (Peterson & Behfar, 2003; Rau, 2005) and encourage hostile behavior, thereby demonstrating a withdrawal (Jehn, 1995). Under the similar circumstances, negative emotions caused by relationship conflict may lead to antisocial reactions (Rudolph et al., 2004) and undervaluation of social exchange offers (Lau & Cobb, 2010). Interpersonal conflict perceptions weaken or reverse the positive effects of conflict (Lawler, 2001), and relationship conflict can lead to increased perception of competition and inequality among individuals (Lau & Cobb, 2010). This situation causes the parties to refrain from engaging in communication and collaboration, thereby negatively affecting the relationship (Baron, 1991; Blatt, 2009; Jehn, 1995; Peterson & Behfar, 2003). Indeed, various researchers have provided evidence that relationship conflict negatively affects the trust and reciprocity norm which a close relationship is based on (Langfred, 2007; Lau & Cobb, 2010; Rispen, Greer & Jehn, 2007).

Thus, it can be argued that the relationship conflict negatively affect the close relations between the co-workers in an organization unit.

Hypothesis 1: Relationship conflict has a negative effect on relational capital among the parties.

Conflict and its relationship with its outcomes can be addressed in two contexts. Negative outcomes tend to occur when conflict causes negative emotions that negatively affect individuals' normal cognitive abilities and ability to perform their tasks, however, when the conflict provides new information that support cognitive processing, it is likely to produce positive outcomes (Jiang, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2012). By taking a broad picture of the field, Barki and Hartwick (2004) defined the concept of interpersonal conflict as a dynamic process in which they experience negative emotions due to the perceived disagreement and interference while reaching their goals in their work. Based on this definition; It is possible to say that there is conflict in cases where disagreement, intervention or negative emotions occur during the interaction between the parties. If the disagreements, negative emotions and intervention behaviors that individuals experience are related to the task, it is possible to talk about the existence of task conflict, and if it is related to the relationship, it can be defined as the existence of relationship conflict (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). However, it should be kept in mind that negative emotions, disagreement, and intervention are subject to perceptions (Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1979), and the likelihood of a destructive conflict between the parties increases if one of the two parties feel negative emotions, or percept intervention (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Because of the reciprocity norm, if one of the two parties feels negative emotions, or percept intervention, the conflict easily becomes a two-sided destructive conflict that may negatively affect the relationship. The observation of relationship conflict and task conflict together, their correlation (Amason & Sapienza, 1997; Choi & Cho, 2011; Jehn et al., 2008) and the mixed results of studies on conflict outcomes may be related to this situation. The benefits of conflict may arise in a pure disagreement about the task. However, a pure disagreement that is not contaminated with emotions and intervention behavior is seldom perceived and recognized as conflict (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Thus, task conflict or relational conflict, especially the intensive ones (Jehn & Mannix, 2001) most likely causes negative emotions at least one party, and because of reciprocity norm it contaminate the counterpart.

Presenting and receiveing criticism is difficult for people, and the critic is held responsible for their negative attitude, which often leads to the perception of task conflicts as personal attacks (Jehn, 1997). When the task conflict becomes personal, it reduces the loyalty and satisfaction between the parties (Amason & Sapienza, 1997; Amason, 1996), moreover, it raises anxiety and tension, and reduces satisfaction and well-being (Dijkstra et al., 2005; Peterson & Behfar, 2003). Individuals tend to have negative impressions about the people they have a conflict with, and therefore they may disagree or reject the opinions and thoughts of the these people (Vahtera et al., 2017). This situation is a challenge against the opinions of the individual and causes a negative effect on cooperation and trust between the parties (Lu & Guo, 2019; Rispens, Greer & Jehn, 2007; Swann et al., 2004).

Each conflict contains an important message, and the conflict often takes place as an interpersonal social exchange that transfers information about the relationship (Jehn, 1997). Messages carried by the conflict may affect the degree of trust, respect (Jehn et al., 2008) and trigger negative emotions (Jiang, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2012). The parties involved in the task conflict may feel negative, angry,

suspicious and offended (Jehn, 1997), thus conflict may cause tension, stress, psychosomatic complaints, emotions of burnout and unhappiness between the parties (De Dreu, 2007; Peterson & Behfar, 2003), and because of these bad emotions they may display hostile conduct. Strong emotional arousal may restrict rational thinking and this situation may emerge with behaviors. When parties of a conflict experience strong emotions, their ability to process the information they have about the requirement and history of the relationship, and perhaps their ability to pursue their own interests and make their decisions in this context, can be significantly reduced (Baron, 1991). Indeed, several researchers submitted that task conflict can reduce positive behavioral intentions and weaken trust, commitment, satisfaction, respect and harmony in the relationship (Jehn et al., 2008; Lu & Guo, 2019). When individuals have negative impressions and feelings about the people with whom they have task conflict, the behaviors that this impression reflects corresponds with the same according to the social exchange theory, and conflict's negative affect on the relationship increases (Peterson & Behfar, 2003; Ring & Van De Ven, 1992; Vahtera et al., 2017).

In consistent with these empirical studies, it can be argued that task conflict affects relational capital between co-workers in an organization unit in a negative way.

Hypothesis 2: Task conflict has a negative effect on relational capital among the parties.

Baron (1991) indicated that the structure of an organization may have an effect on the conflict. Indeed, various researchers have researched the moderation effect of the task type on various outcomes of the conflict and obtained various evidence on these effects (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999; Puck & Pregonig, 2014). However, relationship conflict produces negative outcomes regardless of the type of task performed (Jehn, 1995).

If the task is simple, discussion on the task is unnecessary, since members can often rely on standard operating procedures (Peterson & Behfar, 2003). In this case, there are very few rationales for employees with routine tasks to have a task conflict with their colleagues (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999). For this reason, task conflict is more likely to restrain these types of tasks rather than to develop them (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Therefore, task conflict will be an obstacle for employees who perform routine tasks because it interrupts productive work (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Indeed, Jehn (1995) provided evidence that employees with routine tasks continue to perform their tasks in the same way they do, despite of task conflicts. Thereby, employees performing routine tasks feel uncomfortable with the task conflict (Jehn, 1995), and this situation affects the emergence of negative emotions, and influences the relationship negatively.

Unlike routine tasks, non-routine tasks require problem-solving ability and require to tackle with a high degree of uncertainty (Peterson & Behfar, 2003). Employees with non-routine tasks benefit from various ideas of others, so they tend to interact others more likely, thus those with non-routine tasks are more likely to experience conflict (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999). When individuals are forced to agree on concepts or actions with other employees instead of offering opposing perspectives and engaging in conflict, superior alternatives may be ignored (Peterson & Behfar, 2003).

Non-routine tasks are typically complex tasks that do not contain standard solutions. For this reason, task conflict needs to be considered by the team in order to increase the tendency of employees examining task problems, and deeply and intentionally processing of task-related information (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Indeed, Jehn (1995) observed that employees without routine tasks can be positively influenced by high-level task conflicts they enter into.

Employees with non-routine tasks have more opportunities to experience task conflict. Therefore, employees who differ with their experiences are most probably exchange their individual opinions and ideas derived from their experiences. Accordingly, employees with non-routine tasks are probably become accustomed to the task conflict and see themselves as part of their tasks.

Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the relationship conflict negatively affect the close relationships between co-workers in an organizational unit.

Hypothesis 3: In a unit, the task type of employees moderates the relationship between task conflict and relational capital.

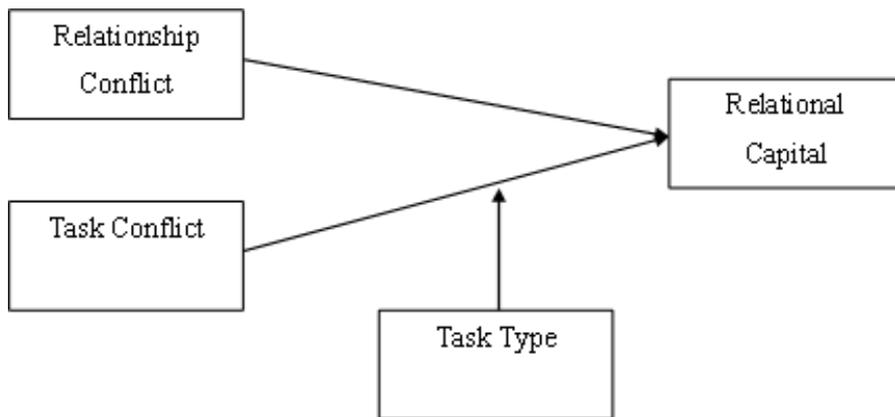


Figure 1. The structural model of the study

4. Methods

The hypotheses were investigated by a data set that was collected by a survey.

4.1. Research setting and sample

The survey was applied between February and June 2019 to participants from Turkey who are members of particular profession groups. The participants have been selected from nine different

professions (Academician, Doctor, Teacher, Engineer, Sales, Call Center Agent [data entry], Technician, Paramedic, Civil Servant). The sample group consists of participants with professions, such as data entry staff and civil servants who are expected to have routine tasks, as well as participants with professions with non-routine tasks, such as engineer, doctor and teacher who have initiative to make important decisions. In spite of the possibility of managers to have more initiatives within the same professional group, participants were selected from those who do not have executive positions. The surveys were sent to 505 people by e-mail and linked-in messaging and answered by 234 participants with a 46% return. The rate of return to surveys can be considered as reasonable in terms of the method of survey sending (Fincham, 2008).

First, the participants were asked to evaluate their co-workers with whom they interact most in the unit they work in, so, it was ensured that the participants chose only one person. Then to what extent they disagreed or agreed the survey items presented to them were asked. Six-point scaling with two aspects such as “definitely agree” at one end and “definitely disagree” at the opposite end was preferred in the study. With this scaling method, which was chosen in accordance with the recommendation of Peabody (1962), the chance of measuring the preference intensity at the two ends and the level of the choices of the participants when choosing one end was obtained, thereby the chance to increase the sensitivity in the measurement was increased. Some researchers suggest that this kind of non-midpoint scale approach should be preferred, especially in studies in which subjective opinions are asked (Cummins & Gullone, 2000). Suggestions containing negative expressions were especially included in the scales to provide reasonable control and validity (Carifio & Perla, 2007). In this way, it was ensured that the participants paid attention to all the questions without being caught in a continuous flow.

97 of the participants are men (Age range= 24-67, $M=37.18$, $SD=8.31$). 137 of the participants are women (Age range= 22-59, $M=33.73$, $SD=8.32$). 91% of the questionnaire forms were completed online and the remaining 9% on paper. 131 of the participants are married, 95% had at least a bachelor's degree of education and 91% had 2 years or more working experience.

4.2. Measures

The scales, originally in English, were translated into Turkish in line with generally accepted procedures, and was followed the procedures which Yayla et al. (2018) applied for translations. In addition, the scales translated into Turkish were translated back to their original language and their equivalents have been tested in terms of accuracy, validity, reliability and quality; it was tried to prevent individuals' judgments, subjectivity and preferences from directing the translations (Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki & Welch, 2014).

4.2.1. Conflict

In the research, the scale developed by Jehn et al. (2008) was used as the conflict scale for its dimensions of task and relationship conflict. The scale was adapted in such a way that the opinion of the participant about the most interacting member was obtained. By this adaptation, the relationship between co-workers in a business unit and the conflict between them could be examined. Although research on conflict and this scale often focuses on teams, groups or intergroup settings within organizations (eg. Jehn et al., 2008; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jehn, 1995; 1994; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009; Vahtera et al., 2017), conflict is found everywhere in organizations that at least two people interact (Dijkstra et al., 2005; Ilies et al., 2011; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Jehn, 1994) and generalizations can be made between levels of analysis (De Dreu, 2007). As a sample of adaptation is: "I have task-related disagreements with my co-worker". For testing the validity of adaptation, a pilot application has been done to 40 participants. After ensuring the quality and validity of adaptation, the survey has been released. The Cronbach's alpha for task conflict was ".86", which is close to Jehn et al. (2008) measurement values. Cronbach's alpha computed for relationship conflict was ".77", which can be considered as internally consistent (Vallerand & Richer, 1988).

4.2.2. Relational Capital

Relational capital was measured by using an adaptation and combination of the scales which were developed by Kohtamäki, Partanen and Möller (2013), and Kale, Singh and Perlmutter (2000). 14 items were translated into Turkish. A group of experts who speak both Turkish and English natively has translated all the scales. After ensuring the quality of translation, the items that have the same meaning in 14 items were eliminated. After all procedures, the number of items was reduced to 11. Cronbach's alpha computed for relational capital was ".94", which can be considered as highly internally consistent (Vallerand & Richer, 1988). All the items load on one factor thus Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been applied. The reported values of CMA model fit indices of the scale are CFI = .982, GFI = .947, NFI = .965, RMSEA = .066, and RMR = .039.

4.2.3. Task Type

The 20-item continuous variable scale used by Jehn's (1995) research was used to measure the task type. 20 items were translated into Turkish (Yayla et al., 1990). Computed Cronbach's alpha for task type was ".69", which can be considered as internally consistent (Vallerand & Richer, 1988).

4.2.4. Control Variables

Individuals may have different belief structures when they have different demographic infrastructures, such as profession, education level and experience (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999). Thus, past research shows that tenure and demographics have significant association with conflict and individuals' reactions (Jehn, 1995). Demographic characteristics, such as education level, gender and

age, are likely to be related to conflict (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999), so they were controlled in this study.

5. Analysis and Results

The SPSS 20 has been used to analyze the data. Correlation analysis was performed to get the first results about the correlation and multicollinearity between variables. The correlations and descriptive statistics for the study variables is provided in Table 1. As expected, relational capital is significantly negatively correlated with both dimensions of the conflict. The other interesting implication of the table is the correlation between two dimensions of the conflict.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Relationship Conflict	2.46	1.07	1							
2 Task Conflict	3.51	1.06	.539**	1						
3 Relational Capital	4.50	.95	-.205**	-.461**	1					
4 Task Type	3.36	.56	-.062	-.038	-.148*	1				
5 Profession	5.65	2.81	-.062	-.109	-.089	.261**	1			
6 Tenure	11.31	8.77	.201**	.118	.146*	-.128*	-.362**	1		
7 Education Level	5.06	1.01	.018	.084	.044	-.157*	-.608**	.091	1	
8 Age	35.16	8.34	.172**	.069	.132*	-.164*	-.401**	.919**	.156*	1
9 Gender	1.59	0.49	-.191**	.020	-.018	.057	.131*	-.188**	-.027	-.205**

* p < .05, ** p < .01; N = 234

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the Hypotheses. In the first model, the relational capital was entered as the dependent variable (like in the rest of the analysis) and the control variables (Profession, Tenure, Education Level, Age, Gender) entered as independent variables. In the next two models, two conflict dimensions were added to the model with control variables separately as independent variables, respectively. In the next model, control variables, task conflict, task type (the moderator), and the multiplication of these two variables were entered as independent variables. For testing the multicollinearity issue, variance inflation factors (VIFs) have been tested and the results emerged as less than 2 for all variables. This shows there is no multicollinearity for the multiple regression models (Aiken & West, 1991).

In Hypothesis 1, as can be seen at Table 2, the interaction term is negative and significant ($\beta = -.5, p < .01$). This result implicates that hypothesis H1 is supported and this means task conflict negatively effects relational capital between counterparts as expected.

In Hypothesis 2, it was predicted that relationship conflict has a negative effect on relational capital. As can be seen at the table, the interaction term is negative and significant ($\beta = -.25, p < .01$).

This result implicates that hypothesis H2 is supported. Thus, relationship conflict also has a negative and statistically significant effect on relational capital.

Table 2. Summary of Analysis Results for H1, H2 and H3

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Profession	-.037	(.03)	-.07	(.03)	-.03	(.03)	-.04	(.03)
Tenure	.165	(.02)	.35*	(.02)	.24	(.02)	.38*	(.02)
Education Level	.012	(.08)	.04	(.07)	.02	(.08)	.04	(.07)
Age	-.034	(.02)	-.18	(.02)	-.06	(.02)	-.23	(.02)
Gender	.011	(.13)	.03	(.11)	-.03	(.13)	.03	(.11)
H1: Task Conflict (TC)			-.50**	(.05)			-.45**	(.05)
H2: Relationship Conflict (RC)					-.25**	(.06)		
Task Type (TT)							-.14*	(.06)
H3: TC*TT							-.05	(.06)
Constant	4,41**	(.76)	6,23**	(.69)	5,07**	(.76)	4,73**	(.66)
R²	.02		.27		.08		.29	
Adjusted R²	.002		.25		.06		.26	

Dependent variable: Relational Capital. *p < .05, ** p < .01. N = 234

To test the moderation effect of task type on the task conflict and relational capital relationship (H3), it was applied the moderation analysis by following the traditional way (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hermida & Luchman, 2013). To analyse the traditional forms of moderation, a three-step process is required. First, a relationship needs to be analysed between the independent variable (task conflict) and the dependent variable (relational capital). Secondly, a relationship needs to be analysed between a moderator variable (Task Type) and dependent variable. Thirdly, a significant relationship needs to be analyzed between the multiplication of independent, and moderator variables and dependent variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). As it is seen in table, there is no statistically significant effect of multiplication (Task Conflict X Task Type) on relational capital. In Hypothesis 3, the moderation effect of task type on the interection between task conflict and relational capital is predicted. Although the hypotesis (H3) predicted a moderator effect of task type, there is no support for it.

6. Discussion

The main debate about conflict revolves around whether the conflict has beneficial effects in organizations or not. Conflict was handled in two dimensions as task conflict and relationship conflict provided an opportunity for researchers to examine the conflict and its outcomes more closely. In studies conducted to date, the existence of researchers who show evidence that the types of conflicts

will generally produce negative outcomes, despite the fact that important evidence of the positive results of the conflict has been obtained, cannot be denied (De Dreu & Weingard, 2003). While debate on the outcomes of the conflicts continue (De Dreu, 2008; Jehn et al., 2008; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003), this research provides a new perspective to shed light on these complex results. It can be said that the conflict, which is a social phenomenon between at least two people, is not sufficiently addressed in the context of the relations between the parties in conflict (Lu & Guo, 2019). In this context, the presented research is a pioneering study that examines the interaction between conflict and relational capital which have important effects on business outputs, such as performance, innovation, collaboration stability, information sharing (Blatt, 2009; Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000; Martini et al., 2016; Moran, 2005).

First, according to the results obtained from the research, both relationship conflict and task conflict affect the relational capital negatively and the related hypothesis are supported. As stated before, the social exchange theory provides an explanation basis for the results obtained. Therefore, the study provides evidence for the assumption that both dimensions of conflict negatively affect the norms of reciprocity among the parties in the relationship, in accordance with the social exchange theory. Moreover, the findings support the Jehn et al.'s (2008) findings of the negative impact of conflict on trust, respect, and harmony which are based on reciprocity, equality, and justice norms (Jiang, Li & Gao, 2008). However, being embedded in the relationship is related to the emotional bond between the parties (Blatt, 2009) and given the negative effects of the relationship conflict on the emotions, the impact of the relationship conflict on the relational capital may be expected to be more destructive. Nevertheless, surprisingly, the negative effect of task conflict on relational capital seems stronger than the effect of relationship conflict. This unexpected findings may have emerged because of the important effects of cultural differences on conflict behavior (Ren & Gray, 2009). The research was applied in Turkey, which has a collectivist culture. The members of collectivist cultures have tendencies toward covered emotional expressions and implicit verbal communication (Ren & Gray, 2009). Even when there are disagreement and discontent, they may not prefer to dissent in the organization for a number of reasons, including cultural factors (see Kaya, 2019; Kaya, 2016). Because of these tendencies, the relationship between the conflict of parties and the relational capital may have become weaker. However, the findings obtained may shed light on inconsistent findings regarding the outcomes of the conflict (De Dreu & Weingard, 2003; Jehn et al., 2008). Jehn et al. (2008) stated that investigating potential mediating variables between conflict and its outcomes will illuminate discussions about the outcomes of conflict. In this case, researching the mediating role of relational capital between conflict and its outcomes can provide important contributions to the literature.

Another notable finding is the strong correlation between the two conflict dimensions. This correlation has been pointed out in various studies (Jehn et al., 2008; Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999), but the fact that the effects of these two dimensions on relational capital are at different levels. This result indicates that the two dimensions are different from each other. De Dreu and Weingard's (2003) meta-analysis study showed that if two dimensions of the conflict have a strong correlation,

task conflict's positive effect on team performance is weakened. If the findings of De Dreu and Weingard is extended to this study, it may be possible to explain some of the findings. Indeed, findings of the study show a high correlation between task conflict and relational conflict and a significantly strong negative effect of task conflict on relational capital. Although this result seems to support the findings of De Dreu and Weingard (2003), it needs evidence from future studies.

The findings of De Dreu and Weingard (2003) show that conflict affects the performance of teams with complex tasks negatively. However, when employees work on simpler tasks, it is likely that conflict affects performance less negatively. The result of De Dreu and Weingard's (2003) research contradicts Jehn's (1995) finding which reveals task conflict has a stronger positive effect for non-routine tasks than for routine tasks on some of the organizational outcomes. Contrary to Jehn's finding, the result of De Dreu and Weingard's (2003) study supports that the more traditional information-processing perspective. De Dreu and Weingard's (2003) study shows that conflict interferes with information processing capacity and thus hinders task performance, especially when tasks are complex and require a high level of cognitive activity. Therefore, it is plausible to say that there are contradictory results about the moderation effect of task type on outcomes of task conflict. The findings of this study make the contradictions more complex and show that the task type does not have a moderation role in the effect of task conflict on relational capital. Although contradictions are available, researchers provide evidence that task type may have an impact on task conflict outcomes (De Dreu & Weingard, 2003; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Jehn, 1995), but the findings obtained in this study suggest the opposite. Recent studies show that culture has an important and powerful effect on conflict behavior (Carnevale & Probst, 1998; Ren & Gray, 2009). Participants who have the collectivist culture in Turkey, may personalize the task conflict regardless of the task type. Moreover, the suppression of emotions plays an important role in the transformation of conflict types to each other, or positive outcomes (Jiang, Zhang & Tjosvold, 2012), and cultures have a significant effect on suppressing emotions (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Therefore, even if the types of tasks change, the way Turkish citizens perceive the conflict may not change. It should be kept in mind that the interaction between task conflict and relational capital may be affected by cultural differences, and cultural differences may cause conflict to be perceived differently (Worchel, 2005). The researchers shall further investigate how cultural differences affect the relationship between conflict and relational capital, and the roles of regulators depending on cultural differences.

6.1. Implications for Practice

Considering the effects of relation capital on organizational outcomes, the results of the research indicate that the relations should be managed well in order for the conflict to produce positive outcomes. Therefore, managers should know that the task conflict, which is usually associated with positive outcomes, is not sufficient for positive outcomes alone, and that relationships should be considered in this regard.

The findings of the research provide important signs to consider regarding the outcomes of conflict at the organizational (employees, consultants and managers) and at the inter-organizational level. The results show that organization members of all hierarchical levels who have conflicts with their teammates are at risk of negatively affecting their relationships. However, based on the results of the research and the results of previous researches (Das & Teng, 1999; Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000), in business cooperations established at the inter-organizational level, such as strategic alliances, the conflicts between the employees and / or managers who carry out the relations between the organizations may negatively affect the cooperations. In this case, there is a need to use various strategies to manage relationship and task conflict.

Moreover, conflict management has important impacts on organizational management. Especially change management (Johnson et al., 2016) and team management effectiveness (Lu & Fan, 2017) highly depends on conflict management. In this respect, the cognitive and emotional effects of conflict on close relationships of co-workers must be kept in the manager's mind. Despite the evidence showing the positive effects of task conflict on team effectiveness, the findings of the study provide evidence that even task conflict may negatively affect organizational outcomes through deteriorating the close relationships among employees.

6.2. Limits

Although conflict and relational capital are events that take place at the dyadic level, the research was applied to only one of the parties in conflict during the research; so the research was structured at the individual level. The main reason for this is the conflict generally perceived as a negative process (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Application of the research at the dyadic level may be causing the participants to hesitate to answer the survey by their real perceptions. However, this research structure restricts the perception differences that may arise from the personal traits of the parties and how this affects the results of the research. Future research can be structured to eliminate this constraint.

7. Conclusion

The research investigated the effects of conflicts occurring between co-workers in the same team on the relational capital between the parties. Previous research has shown that relational capital affects various business outcomes at individual, organization and inter-organization levels. In this context, the impact of conflict on relational capital can shed light on the debates on the outcomes of the conflict. The research also investigated the moderator role of the task type, which has been shown to affect the outcomes of the conflict (Jehn, 1995), on the relational capital.

Research results showed that both conflict dimensions have a negative effect on relational capital. This result should not be seen as a definite proof that the conflict is not functional as it does not explain all the positive or negative outcomes of the conflict. On the other hand, research results have

shown that the task type does not have a moderation role in the impact of conflict on relational capital.

The results obtained showed a strong correlation between two dimensions of conflict.

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