The Relationship between Managers' Conflict Management Styles and Communication Competences: A Research on the Textile Sector in Türkiye

Emine ŞARDAĞI (https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2042-679X), Uşak University, Türkiye; emine.sardagi@usak.edu.tr

Murat SEZGİN (https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2200-3301), Uşak University, Türkiye; murat.sezgin@usak.edu.tr

Önder DENİZ (https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4583-0713), Uşak University, Türkiye; onder.deniz@usak.edu.tr

Yöneticilerin Çatışma Yönetim Tarzları ile İletişim Yeterlilikleri Arasındaki İlişki: Türkiye'de Tekstil Sektörü Üzerine Bir Araştırma

Abstract

Based on employee perceptions, this research examines the relationship between managers' conflict management styles and their communication competencies. The study was conducted in one of Türkiye's largest textile companies, located in Uşak, which ranks among the top ten textile companies in the country. Data were collected using a survey method, with 359 employees participating. The findings reveal a significant correlation between conflict management styles - integrating, obliging, and compromising - and communication competencies such as understanding empathy, affiliation/support, and social comfort. Key elements identified in understanding empathy include 'being understanding', 'getting along well', and 'being supportive'. The supportive variable highlighted elements such as 'giving importance', 'acting individually', and 'being a good listener'. For social comfort, prominent elements were 'putting oneself in the other person's shoes', 'speaking effectively', and 'being flexible'.

Keywords	:	Communication Competencies, Organisational Conflict, Employee Perception, Canonical Correlation, Türkiye.
JEL Classification Codes	:	M12, M54.

Öz

Bu araştırma, yöneticilerin çatışma yönetimi tarzları ile iletişim yetkinlikleri arasındaki ilişkiyi çalışan algılarına dayalı olarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, Uşak'ta bulunan ve ülkenin ilk on tekstil şirketi arasında yer alan Türkiye'nin en büyük tekstil şirketlerinden birinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler anket yöntemi kullanılarak toplanmış ve araştırmaya 359 çalışan katılmıştır. Bulgular, çatışma yönetimi tarzları (bütünleştirme, zorlama ve uzlaşma) ile empatiyi anlama, bağlılık/destek ve sosyal rahatlık gibi iletişim yetkinlikleri arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Anlayış-empati değişkeninde tanımlanan temel unsurlar arasında 'anlayışlı olma', 'iyi geçinme' ve 'destekleyici olma' yer almaktadır. Destekleyici değişkende 'önem verme', 'bireysel davranma' ve 'iyi bir dinleyici olma' gibi unsurlar vurgulanmıştır. Sosyal rahatlık için öne çıkan unsurlar ise 'kendini karşısındakinin yerine koyma', 'etkili konuşma' ve 'esnek olma' olmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler	:	İletişim Yeterlilikleri, Örgütsel Çatışma, Çalışan Algısı, Kanonik Korelasyon, Türkiye.

1. Introduction

Conflict management and communication competence are crucial in professional and personal relationships in today's complex and rapidly evolving business world. Developing these skills is a key determinant of an organisation's success. Effective conflict management is essential for fostering cooperation and maintaining positive business relationships.

Conflict, which naturally arises in environments where multiple people or groups interact, often stems from differences in opinions, values, or perceptions. Managing conflicts effectively is critical in every organisation rather than simply avoiding them. The outcome of conflicts - whether positive or negative -depends on the conflict management process. Effective conflict management, which influences the organisational climate due to the collaborative nature of work, largely depends on managers' communication competencies. These competencies are vital for resolving conflicts, enhancing employee satisfaction, improving work performance, and fostering a positive workplace atmosphere.

When the literature is examined, most of the studies on conflict management focus on the education sector (Topluer, 2008; Corn, 2013; Toytok & Açıkgöz, 2013; Üstüner & Kış, 2014; Uzun & Ayık, 2017; Saiti, 2015; Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020; Iqbal & Parveen, 2020). However, there are also studies on employee perception (Madlock, 2008; Kugler & Brodbeck, 2014), manager credibility (Kingsley et al., 2018), leadership (Madlock, 2008; Mikkelson & Arritola, 2015; Johansson et al., 2014) and burnout (Cho et al., 2021). Although significant research on conflict management has been conducted in various sectors, limited studies have focused on the textile industry, particularly in Türkiye. Communication competence is a critical issue across all sectors, making it a universal challenge for organisations. Thus, further research in different sectors is necessary to gain a broader understanding of conflict management in diverse contexts.

This research contributes uniquely by focusing on the textile sector in Türkiye, a relatively unexplored area in conflict management studies. It highlights the significant role of communication competencies, such as empathy and social comfort, and how these influence conflict management styles like integrating and compromising. The study offers fresh insights into managerial practices, emphasising how these competencies foster positive organisational outcomes, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of conflict resolution strategies.

2. Literature Review

Research on conflict management has grown, establishing it as an academic field, though its development has been gradual. Ma et al. (2008) suggest that the slow growth is due to its dependency on other disciplines, particularly its integral role in management research, highlighting its significance and complicating defining its boundaries. However, Mostenska & Ralko (2014) point out challenges such as the absence of a unified definition

of conflict, the complexity of conflict prediction, and evaluating the effectiveness of conflict management approaches, emphasising the need for further exploration.

Conflict is commonly defined variably across studies. Olanaran (2010) describes conflict as an inevitable result of interdependent groups perceiving incompatible goals, which fundamentally involves perceptual differences during interactions. Chen et al. (2012) note that conflict is a prevalent social phenomenon in organisations, often perceptible even in its absence. It generally stems from a lack of agreement where each party attempts to assert their viewpoints, indicating inherent differences in interests or values among individuals or groups (Kugler & Brodbeck, 2014).

Several factors contribute to organisational conflicts, including resource allocation, objective-related interdepartmental conflicts, job interdependence, and differing values (Şimşek & Çelik, 2016; Mostenska & Ralko, 2014; Saiti, 2015). These conflicts, rooted in communication issues, role ambiguities, and conflicting interests or goals, highlight the inevitability of conflict wherever there is human interaction.

Managing these conflicts is crucial as they are natural and unavoidable. Conflict management is a vital social process that resolves conflicts cooperatively or competitively (Olaniran, 2010; Karip, 2013). It affects organisational performance significantly, with effective conflict management being an integral part of corporate governance, involving key managerial functions such as planning and control (Mostenska & Ralko, 2014; Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). Managers play a pivotal role in aligning conflict management with organisational goals, and their ability to handle conflicts constructively is essential for enhancing organisational outcomes.

While conflicts can lead to innovation and improved problem-solving, mismanagement can decrease job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity, thus preventing innovation (Chen et al., 2012). This dual potential makes it imperative to manage conflicts effectively to harness their positive impacts and mitigate the negatives.

Selecting the appropriate style in conflict management is crucial to resolving conflicts effectively.

This choice is characterised by the behaviours individuals consistently demonstrate in conflict situations (Gümüşeli, 2001: 4). Various styles and methods of conflict management have been classified in the literature, with one of the most influential models being the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II), developed by Rahim (1983). This model builds on earlier work by Blake & Mouton (1964) and Thomas (1976), combining their approaches to interpersonal conflict management into two primary dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. These dimensions determine the extent to which individuals prioritise their concerns and those of others, leading to five distinct conflict management styles.

Rahim and Bonomo (1979) and later Rahim (2002) detailed these styles and their appropriate applications, contributing significantly to the understanding of effective conflict resolution strategies:

Integrating: This method involves exchanging information and exploring differences to devise a mutually acceptable solution, particularly effective in complex or strategic issues. It leverages diverse skills and knowledge without requiring sacrifices from either party (Şimşek et al., 2015: 300).

Obliging: This approach minimises differences and emphasises commonalities to meet the other party's concerns. It is suitable when one recognises one's fault or the greater importance of the issue to the other party. It requires low self-concern and high concern for others (Uzun & Ayık, 2017: 169).

Dominating: Dominating involves prioritising one's needs and often disregarding those of the other party. It is appropriate for less critical issues or situations needing quick decisions. This win-lose approach shows high self-concern and low concern for others (Uzun & Ayık, 2017: 169).

Avoiding: In avoiding, neither party's concerns are addressed, leading to potential delays in conflict resolution. A low concern marks this method for self and others, used when managers prefer not to intervene (Şimşek et al., 2015: 299; Uzun & Ayık, 2017: 169).

Compromising: This method seeks a middle ground, where both parties make concessions to find a mutually acceptable solution. It is beneficial when the parties are equally powerful and aim to prevent prolonged conflicts, reflecting moderate concern for self and others (Şimşek et al., 2015: 300; Uzun & Ayık, 2017: 169).

The ability of people to achieve their goals in social life largely depends on their communication skills. Dell Hymes introduced the concept of 'communicative competence' in the 1960s, highlighting that mere knowledge of grammar rules is insufficient for effectively speaking and communicating in a language. (Rickheit et al., 2008: 15). According to Jablin and Sias (2001: 819), competence, a permanent and fundamental issue in communication studies, is a concept that scientists and practitioners try to conceptualise and functionalize. There is no agreed-upon definition for this concept. The terms "competence" and "satisfactoriness" were adopted in the 1980s as the ability/skill required to perform a particular activity according to requirements. In other words, competence is the characteristic of a person related to a specific field of activity. It means a system of knowledge, abilities, skills, motivational dispositions and attitudes, all mutually and hierarchically linked, enabling one to perform a particular activity (Bjekic et al., 2012: 239).

According to Corn (2013), communication competence is defined as the capability to select a communication behaviour that is both suitable and efficient for a given situation. The most commonly utilised model for describing competence comprises three key components: 1) knowledge, 2) skill, and 3) motivation. Knowledge entails recognising the

most suitable behaviour for a particular situation, while proficiency involves implementing that behaviour appropriately. Motivation encompasses the willingness to communicate effectively (12-13).

Communication competence includes the quality of communication, which usually consists of relevance and effectiveness. Here, effectiveness refers to how well the sender can complete the communication goal. Relevance refers to the extent to which the sender can deliver a message without violating the rules of a particular situation (Kingsley Westerman et al., 2018: 530). Relevance refers to the capability to execute an action in alignment with the expectations and norms dictated by the relationship and situation. Effectiveness pertains to the extent to which the recipient of a message assigns and embraces a meaning closely resembling what the sender encodes (Ni et al., 2014: 168). Therefore, communication competence is an individual's perception of communication appropriateness and effectiveness and cannot be defined by a particular skill or behaviour (Mikkelson et al., 2015: 337-338).

Communicative competence is crucial across various practical domains, not only for interpersonal interactions but also for organizational, public, and intercultural communications (Rickheit et al., 2008: 24). Deficiencies in specific communication skills might lead to numerous individual and social issues, whereas high communicative competence enhances social, psychological, and physical aspects of life. For managers, this competence is vital for achieving organisational goals as it influences their knowledge, skills, and performance (Çelik, 2019: 51). Communication skills help in directing, persuading, informing, and motivating employees towards these goals. Hymes (1971) defines communication competence as the ability to speak and listen effectively, based on tacit knowledge and its application. Çillioğlu-Karademir (2018: 48) adds that adapting to unexpected situations involves adapting.

Effective communication is key in conflict management, requiring managers to act as mediators, facilitating interaction and understanding verbal and non-verbal cues (Uzun & Ayık, 2017: 170). They should demonstrate empathy, effective listening, and persuasive abilities (Mayatürk-Akyol & Budak, 2013: 157). The communicative competence model by Wiemann (1977) outlines essential skills like closeness/support, social relaxation, empathy, behavioural flexibility, and interaction management, emphasising the importance of individual and relational goals (Rickheit et al., 2008: 18).

In conclusion, the information from the literature presents various approaches to the definition, origins, and effects of conflict within organisations. Additionally, it elaborates on the strategic importance of conflict management and the communication competence associated with the role of managers in this process. This research explores the relationship between managers' conflict management styles and communication competencies based on employee perceptions. The study will identify variables influencing these styles and competencies and examine their interrelations, highlighting the broader relevance of

communication competence beyond the education sector, which has been the focus of much prior research. Within this framework, the subsequent hypotheses were formulated:

H1. There is a significant relationship between the conflict management styles of managers and their communication competencies.

H1a. There is a significant relationship between conflict management styles and understanding empathy, one of the communication competencies.

H1b. There is a significant relationship between conflict management styles and social comfort, one of the communication competencies.

H1c. There is a significant relationship between conflict management styles and affiliation/support, one of the communication competencies.

3. Methodology

This study employed a detailed survey method to gather data from employees of a textile company in Uşak, Türkiye, which is recognised for having the largest workforce in the region. Established in 1982, the textile company plays a significant role in Türkiye's textile and apparel sector, contributing to the country's economic growth and employment. The company has a broad export network covering Europe, America, the Middle East, and North Africa. With plans to employ 3,000 people by the end of 2024, the company is ranked 374th in the ISO 500 list and 15th among 26 companies in its sector, further demonstrating its leadership in the industry.

The target population for this research consisted of employees from this textile company. This specific company was selected because of its significant role in the textile sector and workforce size, making it an ideal case for studying the relationship between conflict management styles and communication competencies. The human resources manager of the relevant company was contacted to apply the online questionnaire form created in the study to the employees. The data of the research were collected between 14 and 30 September 2023. Employees' voluntary participation in the survey was taken as a basis, and it was ensured that they could opt out of answering the study whenever they wanted.

3.1. Respondent Characteristics

The study sample comprised 359 employees, and demographic details such as gender, age, educational background, and job positions were recorded. Of the total sample, 68.5% were male, and 31.5% were female. The age distribution showed that 26.5% were 30 or younger, 48.2% were between 31 and 40, and 24.8% were between 41 and 50, with 0.6% aged 51 and above. Educational backgrounds ranged from primary education (45.1%) to high school (46%), with a small percentage holding bachelor's or master's degrees. The majority of respondents (75.5%) were married. Regarding job positions, 82.5% were employees, 12.8% were foremen, and 4.8% held managerial positions. These characteristics provide a comprehensive overview of the respondents.

3.2. Data Collection Process

The data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to employees between September 14 and 30, 2023. The selection of participants was facilitated by contacting the company's human resources manager, who provided access to the workforce for participation. The survey was administered online, ensuring ease of access and voluntary participation, with employees allowed to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The survey was designed to measure the conflict management styles of managers and their communication competencies as perceived by the employees. Before the data collection, the research obtained ethical approval from the Social and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board at Uşak University (decision number 2022-32, dated February 11, 2022). All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the process. Informed consent was secured from all participants, affirming that the data collection complied with ethical regulations.

The reliability of the data was ensured by following a structured process in which the responses were gathered digitally and securely stored for analysis, adhering to ethical standards.

3.3. Data Collection Tools and Reliability Analysis

The questionnaire method was used to obtain data that was in line with the stated purpose of the study. Previous studies were used to determine the scales used in the questionnaire. In this context, the questionnaire form designed by the researchers consisted of three parts. In the first section, inquiries focused on gathering demographic details of the participants. In the second part of the form, the "Organisational Conflict Scale (ROCI-II)" developed by Rahim and Bonomo (1979) and adapted into Turkish by Gümüşeli (1993) was used to evaluate conflict management styles. The scale consisted of 5 sub-dimensions: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising. The scale included 28 items to measure these dimensions: 6 for integrating, 5 for obliging, 6 for avoiding, 6 for compromising and 5 for dominating. The study calculated the reliability value of the 28-item scale related to conflict management styles as α=.902. The generally accepted lower limit of an acceptable reliability level for Cronbach's alpha in the literature is .70 (Collier, 2020; Kline, 2016; Hair et al.,2019). However, in some exploratory studies, it is stated that this value may decrease as low as .60 (Hair et al., 2019: 161; Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). Accordingly, when the reliability values of the subdimensions were analysed, the values of integrating (α=.927), obliging (α=.911), avoiding (α=.602), compromising (α=.848), and dominating (α=.720) were within the desired value ranges. It can be said that only the reliability of the variable belonging to the avoidance sub-dimension (α=.602) was partially low.

In the last part of the questionnaire, there were items to measure the communication competencies of managers. The "Communication Competence Scale", developed by

Wiemann (1977) and adapted into Turkish by Toptaner (2008), was used in the study to measure the communication competence of managers in terms of employee perceptions. The "Communication Competence Scale" developed by Wiemann (1977) was initially considered in 5 dimensions. However, the scale adapted into Turkish by Toptaner (2008) was reduced to three dimensions: understanding empathy, social comfort and affiliation/support. To measure these dimensions in the scale, there were 31 items, 17 of which were understanding-empathy, 7 of social comfort and 7 of affiliation/support. In this study, communication competence was evaluated over these three dimensions.

As a result of the reliability analysis test for 31 items in the communication competence scale, the reliability value was calculated as $\alpha=.977$. It was established that the reliability values of the subdimensions of the utilised scale met the desired level as documented in the literature (understanding empathy $\alpha=.973$, affiliation/support $\alpha=.887$, and social comfort $\alpha=.875$). In this direction, when the reliability values of the scales used in the research are evaluated in general, it is seen that they have high reliability in the ranges accepted in the literature.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the demographic data of the participants. When the gender distribution of the participants is examined, it is seen that a large part (68.5%) consists of men. When the results are evaluated in terms of the age variable, approximately half of the employees (48.2%) are between the ages of 31 and 40. When the educational status of the participants is evaluated, it is seen that the majority (46%) are high school graduates, while those with primary education (45.1%) come in second place. The majority of the participants (75.5%) are married individuals. When the distribution of the participants regarding their positions in the company is examined, it is seen that the vast majority (82.5%) are in the position of workers.

Table: 1
Demographic Features of Participants

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	**246**	**68,5**
	Female	113	31,5
Age	30 and below	95	26,5
	31-40	**173**	**48,2**
	41-50	89	24,8
	51 and over	2	0,6
Educational level of the respondents	Primary education	162	45,1
	High school	**165**	**46,0**
	Bachelor degree	31	8,6
	Master's degree	1	0,3
Marital Status	Married	**271**	**75,5**
	Single	88	24,5
	Other	17	1,9
Position	Employee	**296**	**82,5**
	Foreman	46	12,8
	Chef	17	4,8
Total		359	100,0

Table: 2
Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation Values of Conflict Management Styles And Communication Competence Dimensions

Communication Competence	M	SD
Understanding-Empathy	3,876	1,10847
Affiliation/Support	3,871	1,04642
Social Relaxation	3,763	0,95858
Conflict Management Styles		
Integrating	3,7591	1,17656
Obliging	3,4708	1,19926
Avoiding	3,1792	,84869
Compromising	3,5975	1,02442
Dominating	2,6908	1,01304

When the distribution of conflict management styles and communication competencies according to employee perceptions is examined, it is seen that the highest average value is in the dimension of understanding-empathy (m=3,876) and the lowest average is in the dimension of domination (m=2.69). In the distribution of communication competence, the highest average value is in the dimension of understanding-empathy. The dimension of integration demonstrates the highest value among conflict management styles, with a mean score of 3.75. The lowest value is determined to belong to the dominating (2,69) dimension of conflict management styles.

4.1. Relationships Between Conflict Management Styles And Communication Competencies

Canonical correlation analysis was conducted to explore the mutual and multiple associations between conflict management styles and communication competencies. This technique, a form of multivariate analysis, seeks to identify the correlation between two sets of variables. The purpose of canonical correlation analysis is not to develop models for variables but to explain the relationship between two sets of variables (Karagöz, 2019: 704). The purpose of choosing this analysis in the study is to obtain functions that maximise the correlation between conflict management styles and communication competence variables.

4.2. The Relationship Between Conflict Management Styles And Understanding-Empathy, Which Is One Of The Communication Competencies

Since the lowest number of variables in the set of understanding-empathy variables, one of the conflict management styles and communication competencies, was in the conflict management styles set, five functions were obtained. As seen from Table 3, 2 of the study's five functions were statistically significant.

Table: 3

Canonical Correlation Coefficients of The Understanding-Empathy Variable And The Significance Test

Function	Correlation	Eigenvalue	Wilks Statistic	F	Num D.F.	Denom D.F.	Sig.
1	**,906**	4,562	,131	10,057	85,000	1633,530	**,000**
2	,372	,161	,727	1,757	64,000	1325,486	**,000**
3	,287	,090	,844	1,315	45,000	1007,863	,082
4	,243	,063	,920	1,038	28,000	680,000	,413
5	,151	,023	,977	,609	13,000	341,000	,847

As shown in Table 3, when the explained variance rates of the set of variables are examined, it is seen that the first functions explain a larger part of the set of relations. The value of the first canonical correlation coefficient was obtained as .906. Therefore, the first function was considered in the study. This result shows that the degree of relationship between conflict management styles and the understanding-empathy variable is 90.6%. This relationship can be viewed as a very high relationship. The fact that the Sig value is <0.05 also indicates that the found canonical correlation coefficient is essential.

Table: 4

Conflict Management Styles And Canonical And Cross-Loads of Understanding-Empathy Variable

Understanding-Empathy	Canonical Loading		Cross Loading	
	1.fon.	2.fon.	1.fon.	2.fon.
Our manager…..				
Finds it easy to get along with others	**,914**	,018	**,827**	,007
Can adapt to changing situations.	,853	,185	,773	,069
Is "rewarding" to talk to.	,584	,336	,529	,125
It is easy to talk to.	,818	,156	,741	,058
Generally knows how others feel.	,699	,122	,633	,045
Let others know he/she understand them.	,819	,002	,742	,001
Understands other people.	**,924**	,249	**,836**	,093
Is relaxed and comfortable when speaking.	,785	,019	,711	,007
Listens to what people say to them.	,855	,063	,774	,023
Likes to be close and personal with people.	,824	,096	,747	,036
Generally knows what type of behaviour is appropriate in any given situation.	,852	,078	,772	,029
Is supportive of others.	**,912**	,161	**,826**	,060
Pay attention to the conversation.	,860	,052	,779	,019
People can go to our manager with their problems.	,860	,092	,778	,034
Generally says the right thing at the right time	,860	,056	,779	,021
Is sensitive to others' needs of the moment.	,911	,091	,825	,034
Likes to use his/her voice and body expressively.	,792	,049	,717	,018
Conflict Management Styles				
Integrating	,980	,184	,887	,068
Compromising	,948	,086	,859	,032
Obliging	,945	,072	,856	,027
Avoiding	,538	,097	,487	,036
Dominating	,481	,674	,435	,251

When looking at the canonical loads of the first function among the functions in Table 4, the expressions with the highest rates are "understands other people (.924)", "get along with others (.914)" and "is supportive of others (.912)". Considering the canonical loads of conflict management styles, it is seen that the highest coefficients are on integration (.980), compromise (.948) and obliging (.945). Considering the cross-loads between the variables set, it is determined that those with the highest coefficients were "understanding other people" (.836), getting along with others (.827) and being supportive (.826). According to

the results in the table, the prominent factors in understanding empathy are understanding, getting along well and being supportive.

The variables with the highest values in the cross-relationship of conflict management styles with the understanding-empathy set are integration (.887), compromising (.859), and obliging (.856). Based on these findings, it was concluded that a significant relationship exists between conflict management styles, particularly integrating, compromising, and obliging, and the communication competencies of understanding and empathy. Accordingly, the H1a hypothesis was accepted.

Table: 5
The Proportion of Variance Explained

Canonical Variable	Set 1 by Self	Set 1 by Set 2	Set 2 by Self	Set 2 by Set 1
1	**,697**	**,572**	**,655**	**,537**
2	,019	,003	,102	,014

As shown in Table 5, when the variance rates explained by the self (independent) variables of the set of independent variables are evaluated, 69.7% of the changes in the first function are described by their variables. 57.2% of the changes in conflict management styles, which are independent variables, are explained by the dependent variable, understanding empathy. However, 53.7% of the changes in empathy, which is the dependent variable, are explained by the independent variables.

4.3. The Relationship Between Conflict Management Styles And Affiliation/Support From Communication Competencies

Since the lowest number of variables in the affiliation/support variable set from conflict management styles and communication competencies was in the conflict management styles set, five functions were obtained. As seen from Table 6, 2 of the study's five functions were statistically significant (p<0.05).

Table: 6
Canonical Correlation Coefficients of The Affiliation/Support Variable And The Significance Test

	Correlation	Eigenvalue	Wilks Statistic	F	Num D.F.	Denom D.F.	Sig.
1	**,897**	4,096	,132	25,884	35,000	1462,127	**,000**
2	,549	,431	,670	6,149	24,000	1215,237	**,000**
3	,172	,031	,959	,972	15,000	963,837	,483
4	,085	,007	,989	,496	8,000	700,000	,859
5	,064	,004	,996	,480	3,000	351,000	,696

Looking at the explained variance rates of the set of variables in Table 6, it is seen that the first function explains a larger part of the set of relations. The value of the first canonical correlation coefficient was obtained as .897. For this reason, the first function was considered in the study. This result shows that the degree of relationship between conflict management styles and support variables from communication competencies is 89.7%. This

relationship is very high. The fact that the Sig value is <0.05 also indicates that the canonical correlation coefficient is essential.

Table: 7
Conflict Management Styles And Affiliation/Support Variables' Canonical And Cross-Loads

Affiliation / Support	Canonical Loading		Cross Loading	
	1.fon.	2.fon.	1.fon.	2.fon.
Our manager…				
Treats people as individuals	**,899**	,145	**,806**	,079
Interrupts others too much.	,609	,549	,546	,301
Is a good listener.	**,864**	,136	**,774**	,075
's conversation behaviour is not "smooth."	,583	,620	,523	,340
Ignores other people's feelings	,641	,527	,574	,289
Is interested in what others have to say.	**,957**	,152	**,858**	,084
Doesn't follow the conversation very well.	,527	,526	,473	,289
Conflict Management Styles				
Integrating	**,968**	,191	**,868**	,105
Obliging	**,927**	,226	**,831**	,124
Compromising	**,928**	,208	**,832**	,114
Avoiding	,475	,458	,426	,251
Dominating	,565	,817	,507	,448

As shown in Table 7, it is seen that the elements of giving importance to what others have to say (.957), treating people as an individual (.899) and being a good listener (.864) have the highest canonical load values in the first function. When the canonical loads of conflict management styles are examined, the highest values were determined as integrating (.968), compromising (.928) and obliging (.927). When we look at the cross-loads between the variables in Table 7, it is seen that the prominent factors and the highest coefficients are interested in what the individual says (.858), behaving as an individual (.806) and being a good listener (.774).

When the cross-relationship of conflict management styles with the affiliation/support variable set is examined, it is seen that the variables with the highest values are integration (.868), compromising (.832) and obliging (.831). According to these results, it was determined that there is a very high level of relationship between conflict management styles, such as integrating, compromising, and obliging, and affiliation/support from communication competencies. Accordingly, the H1b hypothesis was accepted.

Table: 8
The Proportion of Variance Explained

Canonical Variable	Set 1 by Self	Set 1 by Set 2	Set 2 by Self	Set 2 by Set 1
1	**,553**	**,444**	**,641**	**,515**
2	,186	,056	,202	,061

When the variance rates of the set of independent variables explained by the self (independent) variables are evaluated, 55.3% of the changes in the first function are described by their variables. 44.4% of the changes in conflict management styles, which are independent variables, are explained by support, the dependent variable. However, the independent variables explain 51.5% of the changes in the dependent variable.

4.4. The Relationship Between Conflict Management Styles And Social Comfort, One of The Communication Competencies

Five functions were obtained since the lowest number of variables in the social comfort variable set among conflict management styles and communication competencies was in the conflict management styles (5) set. As seen from Table 9, only 1 of the five functions in the study was statistically significant (p<0.05).

Table: 9
Canonical Correlation Coefficients of The Social Comfort Variable And The Significance Test

	Correlation	Eigenvalue	Wilks Statistic	F	Num D.F.	Denom D.F.	Sig.
1	**,839**	2,375	,268	15,376	35,000	1462,127	**,000**
2	,250	,066	,903	1,500	24,000	1215,237	,057
3	,151	,023	,963	,880	15,000	963,837	,587
4	,094	,009	,986	,638	8,000	700,000	,746
5	,076	,006	,994	,672	3,000	351,000	,570

When we look at the explained variance rates of the variables set in Table 9, it is seen that the first function explains a large part of the relations set. Therefore, only the first function was considered in the study. Accordingly, the value of the canonical correlation coefficient of the first function was obtained as .839. This result shows that the degree of relationship between conflict management styles and the social comfort variable, which is one of the communication competencies, is 83.9%. This relationship is high. The fact that the Sig value is <0.05 also indicates that the found canonical correlation coefficient is essential.

Table: 10
Canonical And Cross-Load Table of Conflict Management Styles And Social Comfort Variable

Social Comfort	Canonical Loading 1.fon.	Cross Loading 1.fon.
Our manager…		
Is a compelling conversationalist.	**,849**	,712
Does not mind meeting strangers.	,627	,526
Can easily put himself/herself in another person's shoes.	**,962**	,807
It is generally relaxed when conversing with a new acquaintance.	,662	,555
Enjoys social gatherings where he/she can meet new people.	,461	,387
Is flexible.	**,719**	,603
Is not afraid to speak with people in authority.	,619	,520
Conflict Management Styles		
Integrating	**,972**	**,815**
Compromising	**,961**	**,806**
Obliging	**,942**	**,790**
Avoiding	,547	,459
Dominating	,482	,405

As shown in Table 10, it is seen that the expressions "put yourself in another person's shoes (.962), being a compelling conversationalist (.849), and being flexible (.719), respectively, have the highest canonical load values in the first function. Looking at the canonical loads of conflict management styles, it was determined that the highest values

were again integrating (.972), compromising (.961) and obliging (.942). According to the results in the table, the prominent elements in the social comfort variable, one of the communication competencies, were determined as putting yourself in the place of the other person, being an effective speaker and being flexible. When evaluated in terms of cross-loads between the variables in Table 10, it is seen that the highest coefficients focus on putting yourself in the place of the other person (.807), being an effective speaker (.712) and being flexible (.603). When the cross-relationship of conflict management styles with the social comfort set is examined, it is seen that the variables with the highest values are integration (.815), compromising (.806) and obliging (.790). According to these results, there is a high level of relationship between integrating, compromising (.806) and obliging, which are the conflict management styles, and the social comfort variable, communication competence. Accordingly, the H1c hypothesis was accepted.

Table: 11
The Proportion of Variance Explained

Canonical Variable	Set 1 by Self	Set 1 by Set 2	Set 2 by Self	Set 2 by Set 1
1	,513	,361	,658	,463

When the variance rates of the set of independent variables explained by the independent variables are evaluated, 51.3% of the changes in the first function are presented by their eigenvariables. 36.1% of the changes in the independent variable are explained by social comfort, which is a dependent variable. However, 46.3% of the changes in social comfort, the dependent variable, are described by the independent variable, conflict management styles.

5. Discussion

Organisations must manage conflict competently if they hope to succeed in achieving their organisational goals (Gross et al., 2004). At this point, the communication competence of the manager plays an active role in managing conflicts correctly. This study delves into the interplay between conflict management styles and communication competencies within organisations in the textile sector of Uşak, Türkiye, aiming to understand their influence on employee perceptions. It establishes that managers' ability to manage conflicts effectively, coupled with robust communication skills, not only resolves disputes but also fosters a communicative environment that enhances organisational outcomes.

Compared to previous studies, particularly those in the education sector, the results align with existing literature emphasising the importance of communication skills in conflict resolution. For example, earlier research in educational settings (Rahim, 1983; Uzun & Ayık, 2017) has consistently shown that integrating, obliging, and compromising conflict management styles, when paired with high communication competence, lead to positive outcomes such as increased cooperation and reduced workplace tension. This study extends those findings by confirming that similar dynamics exist within the industrial context of the textile sector. However, while many previous studies have predominantly focused on the

education sector, this study provides fresh insights by focusing on an industrial setting, offering a broader application of these concepts across sectors.

Furthermore, this research demonstrates that high communication competence, particularly in empathy and social comfort, is strongly linked to effective conflict management in the textile sector. Managers who exhibit understanding, flexibility, and active listening traits commonly highlighted in communication competence literature (Rickheit et al., 2008) are better equipped to integrate and resolve conflicts. These findings are consistent with studies from other industries, such as healthcare and hospitality (Mostenska & Ralko, 2014; Chen et al., 2012), where communication competence has significantly impacted conflict resolution processes and employee satisfaction.

The practical implications of these results are particularly relevant for managerial effectiveness. In the textile industry, where production processes often involve teamwork and coordination among large groups of employees, conflicts are inevitable. This study suggests that equipping managers with strong communication skills, especially empathy, social comfort, and support, can improve conflict management outcomes. Enhanced communication competence fosters a more harmonious work environment, boosts employee satisfaction, and leads to better organisational performance. Training programs focused on developing these skills could be highly beneficial, enabling managers to navigate conflicts and constructively maintain positive employee relations.

Moreover, the study's findings underscore the necessity for strong communicative leadership in the textile sector and across various industries. Given the similarities between these results and conclusions from studies in other sectors, communication competencies can be seen as a universal requirement for effective conflict management. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge by reinforcing the critical role of communication in resolving workplace conflicts, offering practical strategies to improve managerial capabilities in conflict-heavy scenarios.

However, this study has its limitations. It focuses solely on the textile industry in Uşak, Türkiye, and may not fully capture the dynamics of conflict management and communication in other regions or sectors. Future research should broaden the scope to include different industries and areas, and possibly adopt a longitudinal approach to track how these competencies evolve. Additionally, cross-industry comparisons could further validate whether the effective communication strategies in textile manufacturing apply to other industrial contexts.

In conclusion, this study bolsters academic literature by linking communication competencies with effective conflict management and offers practical strategies to enhance managerial capabilities in conflict-laden scenarios. It highlights the ongoing need for strong communicative leadership and demonstrates how improved communication skills can positively influence organisational effectiveness and organisational outcomes in the textile industry.

6. Conclusion

This study highlights the critical intersection of conflict management styles and communication competence within the Turkish textile industry, providing new insights into how these managerial traits influence employee perceptions. The findings emphasise that managers predominantly adopt an integration conflict management style, which employees highly value, while the least preference is shown for dominating approaches. This balanced method, favouring mutual solutions over authoritarian practices, is further strengthened by high communication competencies, particularly in understanding and empathy.

Communication competence is a unique and differentiating skill in a changing and developing business World (Özdemir, 2023). The research demonstrates that communication competence, specifically in empathy, social comfort, and support, significantly influences conflict management effectiveness. The strong correlation between these competencies and the integration conflict management style suggests that managers who understand, support, and comfort employees are better equipped to handle conflicts constructively. This highlights the importance of cultivating these competencies through continuous training.

From a practical standpoint, these findings have important implications for managerial practices in the textile sector and beyond. The results suggest that targeted training programs enhancing communication skills, especially empathy, social support, and flexibility, can improve conflict resolution strategies. Managers can boost employee motivation, satisfaction, and overall organisational performance by fostering a cooperative and understanding work environment.

Furthermore, the study suggests that conflict management should be approached holistically, considering multiple communication competencies rather than focusing on one aspect. Encouraging open communication lines and continuous professional development can help preemptively address conflicts and promote a more proactive and constructive approach to conflict resolution. These insights are valuable for developing organisational strategies to improve workplace relations and foster a healthier atmosphere.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the broader understanding of conflict management by confirming the relevance of communication competencies in diverse organisational settings beyond the educational sector. By applying these principles to the Turkish textile industry, the study offers actionable recommendations for enhancing managerial effectiveness and employee relations through improved communication and conflict resolution strategies.

7. Limitations of the Study

This study was carried out within certain limitations. This study evaluated the relationship between conflict and communication competence in a single sector. Since the literature mainly deals with the issue of conflict over the education sector, more

comprehensive studies can be conducted on different sectors in future studies. In addition, it can be examined whether there is a sectoral difference by conducting research comparing different sectors. A quantitative design was included in this study as a method; data were obtained only by the questionnaire method, and the results were interpreted. For this reason, it is possible to get more in-depth information by changing the research method or using a mixed technique. At the same time, it can be examined whether there is a cultural difference in the relationship between conflict management styles and communication competence by collecting data from different countries.

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