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# School Administrators' Communication Skills as a Predictor of Organizational Silence

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine not only the level of teachers' perceptions of organizational silence and school administrators' communication skills, but also the correlation between communication skills and organizational silence. The study aimed to determine to what extent school administrators' communication skills and teachers' gender predicted teachers' organizational silence as well. The target population consisted of 206 teachers at primary schools in the district of Yakutiye of the city of Erzurum in the academic year of 2018–2019. Data were collected using a personal information form developed by the researcher, the Communication Skills Scale (CCS) developed by Wiemann (1977) and adapted to Turkish by Topluer (2008) and the Organizational Silence Scale (OSS) developed by Kahveci and Demirtaş (2013a). Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlation coefficient. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine how well independent variables predicted dependent variables. Participants' CCS social relaxation and support subscale scores were highest and lowest, respectively. Participants' OSS school environment and administrator subscale scores were highest and lowest, respectively. There was a significant correlation between school administrators' communication skills and teachers' organizational silence. Regression analysis showed that the subscales of the CCS significantly predicted those of the OSS.

**Keywords:** Communication, communication skills, organizational silence, primary school, school administrator

## Introduction

Given that school administrators' communication skills have an impact on teachers' organizational silence, school administrators who communicate effectively with their employees are more likely to be successful in achieving their goals. School administrators

who pay attention to teachers' ideas and put them into practice have a positive effect on teachers' performance.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine not only the level of teachers' perceptions of organizational silence and school administrators' communication skills, but also the correlation between communication skills and organizational silence. The study aimed to determine to what extent school administrators' communication skills and gender predicted teachers' organizational silence as well.

The study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of organizational silence and school administrators' communication skills?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the correlation between organizational silence and school administrators' communication skills?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of how well communication skills and gender predict organizational silence?

### **Literature Review**

Various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and management examine the concept of communication (Kaya, 2011). Communication refers to the development of interpersonal understanding using verbal or nonverbal tools to achieve goals and to shape behavior (Can, 2002; Sayers, Bingaman, Graham & Wheeler, 1993). Communication provides people with the opportunity to express their thoughts and share and discuss them with others (Tutar, 2003). Organizations use communication to inform, teach, command, influence, and coordinate. Communication is used to tell organization members what to do and where and when to do it. Directing and modifying the behavior of members makes organizational success and sustainability possible (Kalyon, 2012). Communication is a complex process that requires skills at every stage of our lives, including school. Like any organization, the school system is based on communication. Organizational communication involves decision-making processes, leading, and assessing outcomes (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Promoting employees and encouraging their potential brings with it organizational efficiency. If employees believe that they first need to achieve organizational goals to achieve their own goals, then they become committed to the organizational goals. If they fail to see this connection, they will not work effectively. Efficiency is not based on working harder, but on working rationally. If they fail to see this connection, they will not work effectively. Rational work is possible if employees' labor is canalized to achieve organizational goals.

Due to intense conflicts, disagreements and aggressive behavior, we may speak of a crisis in communication (Sabuncuoğlu & Gümüş, 2008). Communication provides managers with the opportunity to perform a situation analysis, find solutions to problems, and assess and monitor the possible consequences of what has been done (Can, 2002). Effective communication is a critical dimension of managerial competence. Communication is a fundamental tool for managers to fulfill their responsibilities such as making group decisions, sharing visions, coordinating organization members and working groups, motivating employees, and managing teams. Managers should be able to share their ideas clearly and convincingly and listen to others effectively (Bateman & Snell, 2016). Managers strive for the success of their organizations. The success of managers depends on their ability to

involve employees in decision processes and to convince them that whatever is done within the organization is in their best interest (Glasser, 1999).

Educational organizations are based on human relations and their inputs and outputs are humans; therefore, communication in educational organizations is more prominent than in other organizations. All actions among education stakeholders are communicative actions (Bolat, 1996). The objective of communication in educational organizations is conveying information to achieve organizational objectives. Communication is, therefore, associated with such processes as planning, coordination, guidance, and evaluation in educational organizations (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013). School administrators should definitely have communication skills to convey information and express their thoughts clearly and to be good listeners and empathetic communicators (Şişman, 2004).

Their position prevents school administrators from having intimate communication with their subordinates, which, in turn, may prevent employees from expressing their own opinions. Employees may display organizational silence behavior in various ways. For example, they sometimes agree to fulfill tasks without objecting or questioning, or they sometimes turn a blind eye to problems and decide to blend in with the rest (Bildik, 2009). According to the discipline of communication, dialogue depends on cooperation provided by two basic concepts; sound and silence (Yarmacı, 2018). Silence is the state of not speaking and is characterized as a negative condition, such as withdrawal or being closed to communication (Çakıcı, 2007). Organizational silence is associated with employees' negative attitudes towards their organizations (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998). Silence causes negative consequences for organizations and their employees. It is, therefore, a big organizational problem that requires an immediate solution. Otherwise, employees want to quit their jobs, have communication problems with their managers, and hinder the creation of a comfortable working environment (Yeşilaydın & Bayın, 2015).

It is obvious that there are different perspectives on the concept of silence. The concept of silence could be considered both in the context of individual and organizational behavior. Individual silence behaviors means that an employee in an organization does not express his/her thoughts, although s/he has the capacity to contribute to the development of the organization (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). It is stated that the members of the organization are mutually influenced by each other. Organizational silence is a situation that occurs when the employees (more than one employee) of the organization do not participate in the discussions and do not contribute to their organizations (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). Not only do individual factors such as gender, age, education, and experience affect employees' silence behavior, but so do organizational factors such as hierarchical structure, competition, authoritarian management styles, and communication problems (Özgen & Sürgevil, 2009). Employees produce new ideas for the sustainability and development of their organization. If they are encouraged and stimulated to create new ideas, they do not display organizational silence behavior. Such organizations become more successful. Otherwise, employees believe that talking about problems will not change anything and will only create a negative impression in the eyes of managers, which may prevent new opportunities for the organization (Özdemir & Sarioğlu Uğur, 2013). Organizational silence depends on organizational structure, individual characteristics, and organizational communication characteristics. Organizational silence leads to silence behavior (Alparslan & Kayalar, 2012) and prevents employees from expressing their ideas that could potentially improve the organization. Managers should, therefore, create appropriate settings to promote employees' success rather than give them negative feedback (Özdemir & Sarioğlu Uğur, 2013).

According to studies on communication skills, school administrators' communication skills are associated with school culture (Lal, 2012; Önsal, 2012), conflict management strategies (Şahin, 2007), total quality management (Atik, 2009), teachers' organizational trust levels (Parlak, 2018), general and organizational cynicism (Uzun & Ayık, 2016), motivation (Akbaş, 2018; Yerlikaya, 2017) and burnout levels (Çelik, 2007). However, they are not associated with school success (Çetinkaya, 2012) and teachers' job satisfaction (Salman, 2017). School administrators should be provided with training on communication skills (Hunt, Dennis, & Hargie, 2000). Managers' communication skills have a significant impact on employees' job satisfaction (Glatfelter, 2000) and job performance (Payne, 2003).

According to studies on organizational silence (cynicism), there is a significant relationship between: organizational culture and organizational silence (Acaray, Çekmecelioğlu, & Akturan, 2015; Ruçlar, 2013), school administrators' use of power and teachers' organizational silence (Apak, 2016; Aydın, 2016), teachers' participation in school management and organizational silence (Çakal, 2016), organizational silence, alienation from work and organizational trust sub-dimensions (Çiftçi & Öneren, 2017), organizational silence and burnout (Kahya, 2015), organizational trust and organizational commitment and organizational silence (Mino, 2002), managers' ethical behavior and organizational cynicism (Nair & Kamalanabhan, 2010) organizational learning and organizational silence (Samadi, Rouholahsohrabi, & Sarayvand, 2013), leadership styles and organizational silence (Batmunkh, 2011; Bildik, 2009; Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005; Güçlü, Çoban, & Atasoy, 2017; Kılıç, Keklik, & Yıldız, 2014; Özdil, 2017; Yenel, 2016), and organizational values and organizational cynicism (Naus, van Iterson, & Roe, 2007).

All in all, school administrators' communication skills and teachers' organizational silence have been studied by various researchers in various contexts. That might be a reason to consider the former and the latter as important dimensions for primary school-improvement efforts. However, we found no studies that investigate the correlation between primary school administrators' communication skills and teachers' organizational silence. Likewise, we also found no studies assessing how well school administrators' communication skills predict organizational silence either. So, this study seeks to fill that gap in the literature. As can be understood from the literature review, we can claim that teachers' perceptions of organizational silence correlate with school administrators' communication skills. The methodology of the study is framed accordingly.

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

This study employed the correlational research model. Correlational research is a kind of nonexperimental research method. Two variables can be measured through implementing the statistical correlation between them without any manipulation on them (Price, Jhangiani, & Chiang, 2018).

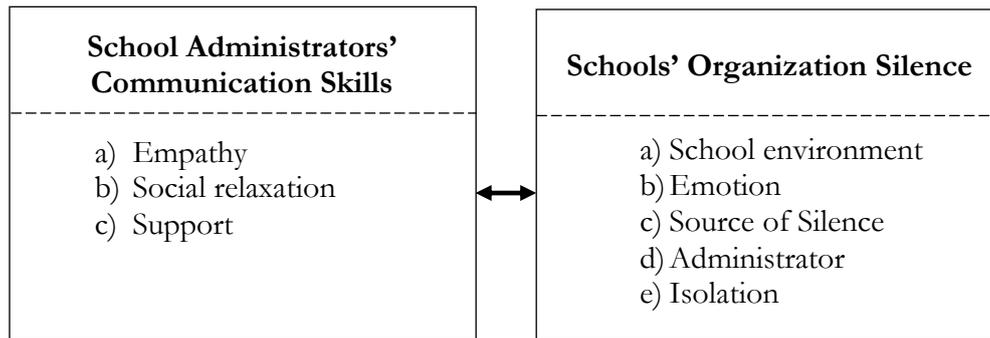


Figure 1. Research model showing the correlational between school administrators' communication skills and schools' organization silence

Dependent variables were the “school environment,” “emotion,” “source of silence,” “administrator,” and “isolation” subscales of the Organizational Silence Scale (OSS). Independent variables were the “empathy,” “social relaxation,” and “support” subscales of the Communication Skills Scale (CCS). According to Kahveci and Demirtaş (2013a).

*School environment subscale* includes these issues: Although teachers know their administrators' deficiencies, they do not talk about them; teachers get negative reactions from administrators and colleagues when they express their opinions; teachers expressing their feelings and thoughts supports organizational learning and development; and administrators are not open to receiving teachers' opinions on new practices.

*Emotion* includes these issues: Teachers prefer to keep quiet rather than talking in difficult situations; they avoid talking about certain topics; and their inner dissatisfaction triggers anxiety and stress.

*Source of silence* includes these issues: The teachers' inability to express their feelings and thoughts clearly is true for all events and situations; the failure of the teachers to express their opinions stems from the authoritarian behaviors of the administrators; waste and loss at school prevent teachers from expressing themselves; the fact that school administrators do not treat teachers fairly prevents teachers from expressing their opinions; and teachers' fear of ignorance and inexperience prevents them from expressing their feelings.

*Administrator* includes these issues: School administrators' “I know the best” attitude has a negative impact on teachers; school administrators' low performance prevents teachers from expressing their problems; and teachers' lack of trust in school administrators prevents them from expressing their feelings and thoughts.

*Isolation* includes these issues: Teachers do not express their feelings and thoughts with the concern that they will be excluded; when teachers explain their feelings and thoughts, they feel that they are not safe; and teachers prefer to remain silent in the face of events and situations, as they try to avoid being perceived as a complainer or troublemaker.

According to Wiemann (1977; Topluer, 2008):

*Empathy* includes these issues: The school principal gets along well with teachers, encourages them to speak, makes teachers feel that s/he understands them, supports them, listens carefully to the people they talk to, and establishes intimate and friendly relationships.

The school principal adapts to changing situations, is comfortable and calm when talking, and manages to use his/her voice and body language effectively.

*Social relaxation* includes these issues: The school principal is an effective speaker, comfortable with meeting new people, and usually comfortable talking to people s/he has recently met; s/he can enjoy social environments where there is an opportunity to meet new people; s/he can easily show empathy to the person communicating; and s/he is not afraid to speak with senior officials.

*Support* includes these issues: The school principal treats teachers as individuals and cares about what teachers say; s/he is a good listener; the principal's speaking style is harsh; s/he interrupts teachers' speaking too much and ignores teachers' emotions; s/he is not concerned with what teachers say when talking to teachers.

### **The Target Population**

The target population consisted of 206 teachers at primary schools in the district of Yakutiye in the city of Erzurum during the academic year of 2018–2019. Of the participants, 55.3% were female. In terms of teaching experience, 14.6% of participants had 1 to 5 years of experience, 24.8% had 6 to 10 years, 26.2% had 11 to 15 years, 18.9% had 16 to 20 years, and 15.5% had more than 21 years.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Data were collected using a personal information form developed by the researcher, the Communication Skills Scale (CCS) developed by Wiemann (1977) and adapted to Turkish by Topluer (2008), and the Organizational Silence Scale (OSS) developed by Kahveci and Demirtaş (2013a). The personal information form was used to determine participants' age and length of employment.

The CCS consists of three subscales: (1) empathy, (2) social relaxation, and (3) support. Their internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) are .99, .76 and .86, respectively (Topluer, 2008). The three-factor structure of the CCS was also confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA reserves the existence of knowledge regarding the structure in which the statistical analysis will be carried out and the existence of the statistical control of this model (Kline, 2013). According to the reliability analysis, the Cronbach's alpha values of the empathy, social relaxation, and support subscales are .95, .96, and .97, respectively, in this study. The coefficient " $\alpha$ ," developed by Cronbach (1951) and also referred to as Cronbach's alpha, was used in the reliability analysis of a Likert-type instrument. According to CFA, the model for the three-factor structure of the scale is consistent with the data. The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Always).

The OSS was developed by Kahveci and Demirtaş (2013a) to measure teachers' organizational silence levels. According to exploratory factor analysis, the scale consists of five factors: (1) school environment, (2) emotion, (3) source of silence, (4) administrator, and (5) isolation. Confirmatory factor analysis reveals sufficient goodness of fit. The Goodness of fit indices indicate the proportion of variance explained by the estimated population covariance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale and the school environment, emotion, source of silence, administrator, and

isolation subscales are .89 and .74, .81, .80, .79, and .83, respectively (Kahveci & Demirtaş, 2013a). According to our reliability analysis, the Cronbach's alpha values of the school environment, emotion, source of silence, administrator and isolation subscales are .94, .87, .84, .86, and .88, respectively. According to CFA, the model for the three-factor structure of the scale is consistent with the data. The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

## Data Analysis

The arithmetic mean of each subscale item was calculated to determine a score for that factor to analyze the sub-problems. Analyses were performed using those factor scores. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to determine the correlation between variables. ( $r$ ) was used as variables being studied were normally distributed. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, which is a statistical technique investigating the predictions between variables, was used to determine how well the independent variables predicted the dependent variables. Standardized Beta ( $\beta$ ) coefficients and  $t$ -test results related to their significance were used to interpret regression analyses. Data were analyzed at a significance level of .05.

## Findings

### 1. Participants' Perceptions Level of Organizational Silence and School Administrators' Communication Skills

**Participants' perceptions of school administrators' communication skills.** Table 1 shows the levels of participants' perceptions of school administrators' communication skills.

Table 1

*Arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of communication skills subscales*

Subscales	$\bar{X}$	$S_s$	Level
Empathy	3.43	.94	Often
Social relaxation	3.44	.93	Often
Support	3.00	.40	Occasionally

Participants' CCS social relaxation and support subscale scores were highest ( $\bar{X}$  =3.44) and lowest ( $\bar{X}$  =3.00), respectively. Their empathy subscale score was  $\bar{X}$  =3.43. These scores indicate that school administrators can meet new people easily, behave in a relaxed manner, communicate effectively, and talk easily with their superiors. For descriptive interpretation of scales, the interval of 1.001.80 was interpreted as "Totally disagree / Never"; 1.81–2.60 as "Disagree / Rarely"; 2.61–3.40 as "Moderate / Occasionally"; 3.41–4.20 as "Agree / Often" and 4.21–5.00 as "Totally Agree / Always".

**Participants' perceptions of organizational silence level.** Table 2 shows the levels of participants' organizational silence perception.

Table 2.

*Arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of organizational silence subscales*

Subscales	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Level
School environment	2.76	.63	Neither agree nor disagree
Emotion	2.56	1.1	Disagree
Source of Silence	2.57	.98	Disagree
Administrator	2.52	1.08	Disagree
Isolation	2.55	1.1	Disagree

Participants' OSS school environment and administrator subscale scores were highest ( $\bar{X}$  =2.76) and lowest ( $\bar{X}$  =2.52), respectively. Their source of silence, emotion, and isolation subscale scores were  $\bar{X}$  =2.57,  $\bar{X}$  =2.56 and  $\bar{X}$  =2.55, respectively. These scores suggest that school administrators' authoritarian attitudes towards and unfair treatment of teachers, and teachers' fear of criticism prevent teachers from expressing their opinions freely.

## 2. Participants' Perceptions of the Correlation between Organizational Silence and School Administrators' Communication Skills

**Correlation between communication skills and organizational silence total scores.** Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient values for the total scores of dependent and independent variables.

Table 3.

*Correlation between communication skills and organizational silence total scores*

Scales	1	2
Communication Skills Scale	1	-.82*
Organizational Silence Scale	-.82*	1

n=206; \*p<.01

Administrators' communication skills total score was strongly and negatively correlated with teachers' organizational silence total scores ( $r = -.82$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that the higher the school administrators' communication skills, the lower the teachers' organizational silence levels. As indicated by Russo (2004), the correlation coefficients between .10 and .29 mean a weak correlation; between .30 and .49 mean a moderate correlation, and above .50 mean a strong correlation. If the correlation coefficient is (+), it indicates that two variables are in the same direction. A negative (-) sign indicates that there is an inverse relationship between the two variables.

**Correlations between communication skills and organizational silence.** Table 4 shows the arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the dependent and independent variables and the correlation coefficients between them.

Table 4.

*Correlations between communication skills and organizational silence*

Variables	Ss	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Empathy	.94	-							
Social Relaxation	.93	.95**	-						
Support	.98	.92**	.91**	-					
School Environment	.63	-	-	-	-				
Emotion	1.1	.58**	.58**	.57**					
Source of Silence	.97	-	-	-	.72**	-			
Administrator	1.08	.75**	.75**	.71**					
Isolation	1.1	.92**	.89**	.93**	-	-	-		
					.52**	.69**			
					.66**	.85**	-	-	
		.79**	.80**	.73**			.71**		
					.65**	.83**	-	.84**	-
		.77**	.75**	.72**			.69**		

n = 206; \*\*p <.01

There was a significant correlation between participants' perceptions of school administrators' communication skills and organizational silence. The CCS empathy subscale was strongly and negatively correlated with the OSS school environment subscale ( $r = -.58$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotion ( $r = -.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ), administrator ( $r = -.80$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and isolation ( $r = -.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ) subscales and was strongly and positively correlated with the OSS source of silence ( $r = .89$ ,  $p < .01$ ) subscale. The CCS social relaxation subscale was strongly and negatively correlated with the OSS school environment ( $r = -.58$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotion ( $r = -.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ), administrator ( $r = -.77$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and isolation ( $r = -.79$ ,  $p < .01$ ) subscales and was strongly and positively correlated with the OSS source of silence subscales ( $r = .92$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Lastly, the CCS support subscale was strongly and negatively correlated with the OSS school environment ( $r = -.57$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotion ( $r = -.71$ ,  $p < .01$ ), administrator ( $r = -.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and isolation ( $r = -.72$ ,  $p < .01$ ) subscales and was strongly and positively correlated with the OSS source of silence ( $r = .93$ ,  $p < .01$ ) subscale. School administrators should communicate effectively with teachers, make them feel comfortable, and allow them to express their opinions freely. Otherwise, teachers may be reluctant to express their ideas that can potentially improve the school. School administrators' inadequate communication skills may negatively affect their relationships with teachers.

### 3. Participants' Perceptions about School Administrators' Communication Skills Prediction on Organizational Silence

#### How well communication skills and gender predict organizational silence.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine how well school administrators' communication skills and gender predicted organizational silence. Table 5, Table 6, Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9 present the results.

**Prediction of school environment subscale.** Table 5 shows the multiple regression analysis results for predicting school environment subscale.

Table 5

*Multiple regression analysis results for predicting school environment subscale*

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	4.59	0.35	-	13.15	0.00
Empathy	-0.26	0.12	-0.38	-2.05	0.04*
Social Relaxation	-0.16	0.13	-0.24	-1.27	0.20
Support	-0.11	0.09	-0.07	-1.22	0.22
Gender	-0.13	0.07	-0.11	-1.85	0.07

$F = 28.23$ ; \* $p < .05$   $R = .60$ ;  $R^2 = .36$

Only the CCS's empathy subscale significantly and negatively predicted the OSS's school environment subscale ( $F=28.23$ ,  $p<.05$ ). There were no statistical significance for social relaxation, support, and gender. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the predictive power of the independent variables was ranked as follows: empathy, gender, social relaxation, and support.

**Prediction of school emotion subscale.** Table 6 shows the multiple regression analysis results for predicting emotion subscale.

Table 6

*Multiple regression analysis results for predicting emotion subscale*

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	6.40	0.48	-	13.22	0.00
Empathy	-0.45	0.17	-0.39	-2.62	0.01*
Social Relaxation	-0.47	0.17	-0.40	-2.70	0.01*
Support	-0.20	0.13	-0.07	-1.54	0.12
Gender	-0.16	0.10	-0.07	-1.57	0.12

$F = 71.32$ ; \* $p < .05$   $R = .77$ ;  $R^2 = .59$

The CCS's empathy and social relaxation subscales significantly and negatively predicted the OSS's emotion subscale subscale ( $F=71.32$ ,  $p<.05$ ). There were no statistical significance for support and gender. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the predictive power of the independent variables was ranked as follows: empathy, social relaxation, gender, and support.

**Prediction of source of silence subscale.** Table 7 shows the multiple regression analysis results for predicting source of silence subscale.

Table 7.

*Multiple regression analysis results for predicting source of silence subscale*

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	6.32	0.41	-	15.59	0.00
Empathy	-0.50	0.14	-0.48	-3.46	0.00*
Social Relaxation	-0.38	0.15	-0.36	-2.58	0.01*
Support	-0.23	0.11	-0.09	-2.11	0.04*
Gender	-0.09	0.08	-0.04	-1.06	0.29

$F = 91.00$ ; \* $p < .05$   $R = .80$ ;  $R^2 = .64$

The CCS's empathy, social relaxation and support subscales significantly and negatively predicted the OSS's source of silence subscale ( $F=91.00$ ,  $p<.05$ ). There was no statistical significance for gender. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the predictive power of the independent variables was ranked as follows: empathy, social relaxation, support, and gender.

**Prediction of source of administrator subscale.** Table 8 shows the multiple regression analysis results for predicting administrator subscale.

Table 8.

*Multiple regression analysis results for predicting administrator subscale*

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	6.60	0.44		15.09	0.00
Empathy	-0.44	0.16	-0.39	-2.82	0.01*
Social Relaxation	-0.53	0.16	-0.46	-3.34	0.00*
Support	-0.24	0.12	-0.09	-2.06	0.04*
Gender	-0.07	0.09	-0.03	-0.80	0.43

$F = 94.61$ ;  $*p <.05$   $R = .81$ ;  $R^2 = .65$

The CCS's empathy, social relaxation and support subscales significantly and negatively predicted the OSS's administrator subscale ( $F=91.00$ ,  $p<.05$ ). There was no statistical significance for gender. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the predictive power of the independent variables was ranked as follows: social relaxation, empathy, support, and gender.

**Prediction of source of isolation subscale.** Table 9 shows the multiple regression analysis results for predicting isolation subscale.

Table 9.

*Multiple regression analysis results for predicting isolation subscale*

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	6.40	0.49		13.00	0.00
Empathy	-0.65	0.18	-0.54	-3.70	0.00*
Social Relaxation	-0.31	0.18	-0.25	-1.73	0.09*
Support	-0.17	0.13	-0.06	-1.27	0.20
Gender	-0.14	0.10	-0.06	-1.33	0.18

$F = 74.98$ ;  $*p <.05$   $R = .77$ ;  $R^2 = .60$

The CCS's empathy and social relaxation subscales significantly and negatively predicted the OSS's isolation subscale ( $F=74.98$ ,  $p<.05$ ). There were no statistical significance for support and gender. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the predictive power of the independent variables was ranked as follows: empathy, social relaxation, gender, and support.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated not only the level of primary school teachers' perceptions of organizational silence and school administrators' communication skills, but also the correlation between them. The study investigated how well the communication skills and teachers' gender predicted the organizational silence as well.

Participants' CCS social relaxation and support subscale scores were highest and lowest, respectively. School administrators can communicate with other people easily and express themselves freely. They are socially influential, and therefore, they have an influence on their employees as well. Şahin (2007), Şimşek and Altinkurt (2009), and Uzun and Ayık (2016) reported similar results. Topluer (2008) reported that participants' CCS empathy and social relaxation subscale scores were highest and lowest, respectively.

Participants' OSS school environment and administrator subscale scores were highest and lowest, respectively. When school administrators exhibit authoritarian behavior, try to oppress teachers, and abuse the power bestowed upon them by their positions, this can significantly prevent teachers from expressing their opinions freely. School administrators' unfair treatments may also increase teachers' organizational silence levels. Çakal (2016) and Çiftçi and Öneren (2017) reported similar results. Kıranlı, Güngör and Potuk (2018) reported that schools have moderate general organizational silence levels. Kahveci and Demirtas (2013b) reported a similar finding in primary schools. They stated that school administrators and teachers prefer to remain silent in the face of unexpected incidents and unfavorable situations that take place in their schools because they do not want to be perceived as annoying people who complain about everything.

There was a strong significant negative correlation between participants' perceptions of school administrators' communication skills and organizational silence. The CCS empathy subscale was strongly and negatively correlated with the OSS school environment, emotion, administrator, and isolation subscales and was strongly and positively correlated with the OSS source of silence subscale. These results suggest that school administrators should establish good relationships with teachers and provide them with settings that encourage them to express their opinions freely. They should also appreciate them as individuals and empathize with them. Otherwise, teachers choose not to exert effort to remedy shortcomings even if they recognize them. The CCS social relaxation subscale was strongly and negatively correlated with the OSS school environment, emotion, administrator, and isolation OSS subscales and was strongly and positively correlated with the OSS source of silence subscale. School administrators should be flexible when needed and support teachers in difficult times. This can motivate teachers to perform their duties more willingly, resulting in a positive school climate and successful results.

The CCS support was strongly and negatively correlated with the OSS school environment, emotion, administrator and isolation subscales and was strongly and positively correlated with the OSS source of silence subscale. School administrators have important responsibilities and duties in educational activities and should communicate effectively with teachers when fulfilling those responsibilities and duties. Effective communication plays a critical role in motivating teachers to focus on objectives. Ayık (2015), Uzun and Ayık (2016), and Qian and Daniels (2008) reported similar results. Organizational communication is a key factor affecting organizational management activities and resulting in major changes in the management styles within organizations (Andrioni & Popp, 2012). Establishing efficient and effective communication is a difficult process, through which administrators have important responsibilities. Organization members should understand their tasks in order for organizations to achieve their goals. Administrators should, therefore, be able to effectively communicate teachers' responsibilities to them (Borca & Baesu, 2014). Communication problems can lead to organizational cynicism and cause organization members to lose their determination or motivation to work, which may lead to an increase in

organizational problems. Appropriate communication strategies should be used to minimize this problem (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997).

According to the regression analysis, the CCS empathy subscale significantly and negatively predicted the OSS school environment, emotion, source of silence, administrator, and isolation subscales. These results supported that empathy is a core skill expected from administrators for reducing teachers' organizational cynicism since it has the most comprehensive independent variable for predicting all organizational silence subscales. Given the detailed explanation of the empathy skills of school principals by Wiemann (1977; Topluer, 2008) above, empathy skills can mean a combination of all good communication skills. For example, the school administrators always get along well with teachers, support them, etc. In such a school environment, administration, and climate, teachers can express their opinions about school problems, on new practices, etc. Teachers prefer not to keep quiet in difficult situations and their inner dissatisfaction does not trigger anxiety and stress. What's more, when there is empathy, sources of silence and isolation for teachers are lessened or eliminated altogether. That could be understood from a shared definition of empathy stressed in this study as well. That could be the main answer to the third research question.

The CCS social relaxation subscale significantly and negatively predicted the OSS emotion, source of silence, administrator, and isolation subscales. The CCS support subscale significantly and negatively predicted the OSS source of silence and administrator subscales. Gender did not predict any of the OSS subscales. An effective communication system is an instrument for organizational cooperation and motivation. Communication is, therefore, vital for organizations. Organizations need effective communication systems to promote themselves and to have a positive public image (Tunçer, 2012). People should act so that schools can achieve their goals. Manifesting itself through communication, goal-directed behavior depends on the clarity of messages conveyed. The administrators, teachers, and students of schools with an effective organizational communication system wish to share their opinions with each other and understand each other and act accordingly. School objectives and ways to achieve them are developed through intensive dialogue (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Communication plays a key role in the success of administrators and in the efficiency of organizations. Communication is an indispensable component of administration to motivate employees to work, and it's also a critical component that determines leadership (İlgar, 2005).

Based on the results, the following recommendations can be made: School administrators should use a style of communication that mobilizes teachers. In doing so, they should accept teachers as individuals and listen closely to their feelings and opinions. School administrators should have a way of speaking that reduces stress, which allows teachers and students to perform more qualified and efficient educational activities. School administrators' authoritarian attitudes are incompatible with today's understanding of management. Administrators should avoid coercive management approaches and take into account how their actions affect teachers. School administrators should treat teachers fairly and provide them with a positive school climate. Finally, it is obvious that the study has substantial implications for educational administration and school effectiveness policy at the national and international levels. Further studies should also provide insight into this topic by investigating teachers' perceptions.

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