

# The Relationship of School Administrators' Leadership Styles with Organizational Dissent and Resistance to Change according to Perceptions of Teachers

Research Article

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship of the school administrators' leadership styles with resistance to change and organizational dissent based on teachers' perceptions, and also to reveal whether the leadership styles of the administrators predict resistance to change and organizational dissent. After defining leadership styles, their relationship with organizational dissent and resistance to change was addressed and a survey was conducted in line with this purpose. The survey was applied to 505 teachers working in the central districts of Mersin in the 2018-2019 academic year. In the study, it was concluded that there is no relationship between autocratic leadership and the sub-dimensions of organizational dissent. While democratic and transformational leadership styles have a positive significant relationship with horizontal dissent, they have no significant relationship with vertical dissent. Democratic and transformational leadership styles do not predict vertical dissent significantly, but they predict horizontal dissent significantly.

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### Keywords:

Leadership Styles, Organizational Dissent, Resistance to Change, Teacher

## Introduction

The aim of this study is to determine the relationship of school administrators' leadership behaviours in their schools with resistance to change and organizational dissent behaviours in schools with regard to the

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teachers' opinions. In the study, three concepts were correlated: The leadership behaviours of school administrators, organizational dissent, and organizational change.

School administrators are the natural leaders of schools. In general terms, the leader can impact on the result with his/her distinguishing personality (Yücel and Akgül, 2016). The leader is crucial with regards to the organizational efficiency (Yukl, 2010). The quality of the behaviors that school administrators show while managing educational activities are considered as their leadership characteristics. School administrators should be able to guide and encourage the school members, dig out their creativity and make the teachers ready for change by strengthening their organizational ties under the framework of a vision (Çağlar, 2004). These behaviours of administrators may also be determinant of determining the overall climate in schools.

The leaders demonstrating power and control oriented behaviours may lead to passivization of employees as well as their alienation and burnout; whereas, democratic and transformational leadership behaviours may contribute to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship of the employees. Besides, the way organizational leaders act in the workplace can also be influential on employees' organizational dissent and resistance to change. According to a study, the perception of leaders as autocratic or democratic significantly predicts the organizational commitment of the members of the organization (Bayyurt and Kılıç, 2017). In another study, it was found that autocratic and participatory leadership behaviours have a significant effect on organizational citizenship (Altan and Özpehlivan, 2019). When leaders are unfair to their subordinates, violate their rights and do not include them in decision-making process, the employees are likely to demonstrate organizational dissent (Kassing and Armstrong, 2002).

In a study which examined the opinions of elementary and secondary school administrators about organization dissent, it was found that teachers showed dissent against prejudice, the way of decision-making, impairment of personal interests, unethical and unfair practices, and the way sources are supplied and used (Ağalday, Özgan and Arslan, 2014). Another finding of this study is that teachers exhibited dissent behaviours against change. Literature review reveals that organizational members are expected to show resistance to change (Korkut, 2009).

Democratic, participatory, transparent management approach of school administrators can reduce the destructive dissent and resistance to change, strengthening solidarity and cooperation in the school. On the other hand, authoritarian, one-way decision-making and communication process, and ignoring school members may lead to emotional breakouts against the school, and in some cases, to prohibitive attitudes such as opposition and resistance. The adaptation of schools to changing conditions outside the school depends on the effective management of change and adaptation processes at school, especially by school administrators. School administrators need to take into account the situations of opposition and resistance in case of change. This study is considered to help school administrators establish a process of managing change by revealing in what way the organizational dissent and resistance to change behaviours differ by the leadership behaviours of the school administrators.

## **Leadership Styles, Organizational Dissent, Resistance to Change**

### **Leadership Styles**

One of the basic concepts in the study is leadership styles. Leadership can be defined as the sum of knowledge and skills to activate the people who have come together in order to achieve a goal. Leader is the one who affects the behaviours of subordinates in line with the organizational goals (Yolaç, 2011). It is accepted that school administrators' behaviours in their schools reflect their leadership behaviours. Therefore, the leadership styles of school administrators are to be determined based on the opinions of teachers.

A new concept, style or application of leadership is constantly being suggested in the literature. The fact that the studies on organizational behaviour are administrator and leadership oriented also indicates that the focus is on the management dimension of organizational processes. This is also to take "administrator" behaviour as the main factor of organizational behaviour. In this respect, this study focuses on the top of the organizational hierarchy, namely the management dimension, in that, it explains the relationship of school administrators' leadership styles with the school members' dissent and resistance behaviours. In this respect, the study also tries to reveal how school management is perceived by teachers.

As the literature on leadership is expanding every day, so are the definitions and classifications related to the concept of leadership increases. In this study, the management styles of school administrators are classified into three groups based on the tendency of the administrators to use power: the "autocratic leadership" style, which defends the managerial power to remain at the top manager as much as possible and focuses on the top management in the hierarchy; the "democratic leadership" style, in which decision processes are carried out based on the cooperation and dialogue of the management-school components, and thirdly, the "transformational leadership" style that occurs situationally in times when organizational internal and external conditions change intensely. In this classification, the situation in which school administrators' tendency to use power can be observed is organizational "decision" processes (Tunç, 2018). The management understanding of the administrators is reflected by whom decisions are taken in schools and what way is followed in decision processes.

### **Autocratic leadership**

Autocratic leadership refers to the leadership style where power is gathered at the top of the management hierarchy, and decisions are made by the top management, and subordinates are not involved in decision-making. In this type of leadership, the leader takes the decisions alone, no objection to the leader's decisions is accepted, and the leader expects that the decisions, orders and instructions are fully followed (Şafaklı, 2005). The leader is the person who knows best and uses rewards, punishments and laws as the source of power. Since the autocratic leaders act task-oriented, the organizational structure must be operated with a regular, hierarchical and mechanical design. Otherwise, the efficiency will be low as the organizational process is impaired (Razi, 2003). In authoritarian leadership, the perception of the leader about himself and of the subordinates about the leader is important. The leader considers himself as the best decision maker. As From (2016) stated, the belief that strict rules and punishment are needed to achieve long-term organizational ideals as they are in favour of organizational members is common in authoritarian thinking. An important point that nurtures this belief is the perception that conditions outside the organization constantly threaten the organizational existence. In an environment where external and internal threats are constantly seeking opportunities, the leader is not expected to start discussions on management decisions. Instead, the leader is committed to organizational existence, does not allow his decisions to be discussed, challenged or even evaluated in good faith, as well as organizational criticism. Organizational criticism is perceived as opposing and distorting the "good" efforts of the manager who devotes himself to the organization.

Autocratic leaders ignore the expectations and needs of their subordinates causing them to experience negative emotions, cool down their jobs, and experience alienation and burnout. It was found by Kars and İnandı (2018) that the autocratic behaviors of school principals reduce the organizational trust of teachers towards their institutions. According to the findings of another study, it has been observed that autocratic leadership has a positive effect on organizational silence and organizational burnout (Ayan, Ünsar and Oğuzhan, 2016). This leadership style is important in terms of making decisions quickly in some complex and emergency situations, and being able to mobilize uneducated and unmotivated organization members in a short period of time through pressure and fear (Şafaklı, 2005).

## **Democratic leadership**

Democratic leadership argues that, unlike autocratic leadership, organizational decisions should be made with the participation of the components affected by the decision. In terms of the use of power, although it is top management oriented, it is a leadership approach that ensures the participation of the organizational members. Democracy refers, in organizational context, to the fact that organizational members solve organizational problems through mutual communication. Democratic leaders serve the group, adopt the group norms and values, and lead the group behaviour by considering the group dynamics (Ergun, 1981; Güney, 1999). Democratic leaders ensure that all the members are included in the decision in addition to sharing responsibility, and establishing trust and solidarity among the components.

One of the most important features of democratic leadership is that it gives a sense of trust to both the organizational members and the organizational environment. If the organizational members feel safe, they will trust the other members. Job satisfaction and productivity will increase and absenteeism will be low in individuals working with this sense of trust (Güney, 1997; Şimşek, 2005). In case of a change in organizations, providing suitable environments for discussing it, allowing employees to utter their ideas clearly and creating environments where they can oppose when necessary will make up for the needs of the organizational members, which will positively reflect upon both the employees and organizations.

## **Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership has gained importance as a post-modern leadership approach with regards to the researches conducted in the field of leadership in recent years. The concept of transformational leadership first appeared in McGregor Burns' "Leadership" book in 1998, and was later developed by Bernard Bass and others as transformational leadership theory (Şahin, 2006). In this leadership style, the ability of the leader to maximize the desire for change in his subordinates and to meet the emotional needs of the subordinates is of priority (Çelik, 2003). Burns (cited by Genç & Halis, 2006) describes transformational leadership as the leadership that can make effective change; Daft (2000), on the other hand, defines it as the ability to create change in the organization as a whole. Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990) suggest the characteristics of the transformational leader as defining and explaining a vision, being a suitable model, promoting the acceptance of group goals, having high performance expectations, providing individualized support and intellectual stimulation.

The main goal in transformational leadership is to adapt to the rapidly changing world and achieve organizational transformation (Çelik, 2003). In other words, the transformational leader is the person who is moving towards the future, so he has to have a vision and make this vision adopted by the members of the organization. The transformational leader is not only implementing and introducing innovations, but also focusing on the development of employees and making efforts for employees to improve themselves and to demonstrate their skills (Celep, 2004). Transformational leaders are known to do well in both preparing employees for change and adapting changes to organizations. In this way, he makes the organization reach its target in a short time by trying to harmonize the dissenting employees with the organization and to make the change with them. At the same time, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship and job satisfaction will increase in employees, and thus, negative emotions will disappear. In this context, it is useful to explain the organizational dissent.

## **Organizational dissent**

The concept of dissent means "the state of being against an attitude, an opinion or a behaviour" or "contradiction" (Turkish Language Association, 2019). Organizational opposition is the situation that individual feels contrary in the organization. Organizational members express some conflicts and contradictions within the organization. Organizational dissent indicates these differences as well as differences

of thought in administrative decisions (Kassing, 2008). In this respect, organizational dissent is a natural situation that results from people thinking differently.

It is necessary to distinguish the organizational dissent from the disruptive, preventive and destructive behaviours in the organization. The basis of the organizational dissent lies in the fact that the employees could easily express the problem when a problem is detected in organizations. In other words, organizational dissent does not mean to oppose and resist to every event or situation, rather, it involves the understanding of presenting a new perspective to organizational life. It does not mean creating a destructive conflict by dissenting every decision, situation and event. Organizational conflict and organizational opposition should not be confused. Organizational conflict reflects the situation between groups or individuals whose interests do not match, whereas organizational dissent imply that employees do not participate in the practices implemented by managers in the organization and have different opinions (Aslan, 2003; Özdemir, 2013).

Organizational differences of opinion may also be a sign of an organizational problem. In order for the organizational dissent to begin, a triggering problem must occur. The triggering event leads individuals to express their dissenting thoughts on managerial decisions and practices (Graham 1986; Kassing, 1997; 2002). In this regard, organizational decisions also have the potential to generate an organizational dissent. Kassing and Armstrong (2002) categorized the triggering events that cause organizational dissent under nine headings:

- Managers violate the rights of organizational members and act unfairly,
- Organizational changes,
- The process of making organizational decisions,
- Ineffective management practices,
- Managers' failure to fulfil their duties and problems,
- Unfair practices in the use of organizational resources,
- Unethical practices,
- Evaluation of the performance of organization members and managers,
- Some organizational practices adopted by managers damage the organization

Organizational dissent refers to organizational sensitivity of the organizational members rather than an organizational disruption. Employees who have a sense of responsibility and are committed to the organization are sensitive to organizational processes. In addition to the organizational dissent having a positive effect on the quality of the decisions taken within the organization (Dooley and Fryxell, 1999), there is a significant relationship between the integration of individuals who show organizational dissent against their work and their organizational commitment (Kassing, 2000). On the other hand, for someone who is not loyal to the organization, experiences alienation and burnout, or does not like his job, what happens in the organization will not matter. However, individuals who make an effort for the future of the organization, while making efforts for the change that they think is necessary for the organization, may show resistance for situations that they think are not beneficial. In this context, it is useful to explain the phenomenon of change and situations that affect resistance to change.

### **Resistance to change**

Change means bringing something from one level to another and also the differentiation in something within a certain period of time (Çolakoğlu, 2005). Organizational change is the process of creating a new system in accordance with changing conditions by differentiating various structures in the existing structure of the organization. Organizations are systems established by people who come together to achieve specific goals. While fulfilling these goals, organizations are exposed to various changes and it seems impossible for them to remain indifferent to these changes. Therefore, organizations need to follow environmental changes,

adapt to their environment, accelerate their development, take advantage of new technologies and maintain their ability to compete (Güçlü and Şehitoğlu, 2006).

As organizational change means moving from a known situation to an unknown state, it can create anxiety in individuals (Helvacı, Çankaya, and Bostancı, 2012). Such anxiety can sometimes appear as resistance to change. There may be a number of reasons for resistance to change arising from the individual's self, other organizational members, and organizational structure. If individuals increase their power through change, they can support change, but they can resist change when they think that they cannot get power. If the changing situation threatens one's safety, comfort and emotional state and requires new skills, they can resist change (Dalin, Rollf, and Kleekamp, 1993). These barriers to change can be considered as individual barriers.

As aforementioned, the future uncertainty underlies the resistance to and nervous about change (Toffler, 2003). In case of uncertainty, organizational employees need a guiding and reliable leader (Özmen and Sönmez, 2007). If leaders cannot explain the uncertainties explicitly and involve employees in decisions about change, then resistance to change will probably occur. Resistance to change is of organizational as well as individual and administrative (Erdoğan, 2002). Organizations' ability to undergo a change process in a holistic, complete and timely manner is largely dependent on leaders who can perceive change as part of organizational life and have the necessary efficacy. Leaders should be able to exhibit more democratic and transformational leadership behaviours to reduce resistance to change (Çolakoğlu, 2005).

### **Relationship Between Leadership Styles, Organizational Dissent and Resistance to Change**

One of the most important tasks in change management in terms of organizational members is of school leaders. In a sense, the success of change depends on the effectiveness of the leader (Olkun, 1996). Schools play a critical role in achieving healthy social change. As schools change their surroundings, they are also affected by the changes in their environment. Therefore, school administrators, teachers, students and parents are affected by both internal and external organizational change (İnandı, Yeşil, Karatepe, and Uzun, 2015). In this respect, school administrators should also be an effective change manager. Fear of uncertainties may cause those who benefit from the existing structure to mobilize their sense of dissent and thus to resist to change. This is a natural result that can be witnessed in a change process. Instead of avoiding natural reactions to change, the administrators should identify the factors causing resistance and remove their negative effects (Çolakoğlu, 2005). In a study examining teachers' behaviors of resisting change, it was observed that teachers perceived change positively and their tendency to resist change was low (Çakır, 2009). Another study examining the reasons why teachers opposed to school administrators unveiled that the administrators who take decisions about teachers without consulting teachers and express their political views clearly were observed as reasons for dissent (Dağlı and Ağalday, 2015). According to another study by Yıldız (2014), it was found that the level of dissent of primary school teachers was low, that the members of the organization were afraid of dissenting against the administrator and that they were worried about being harmed in some way (Özdemir, 2013). In addition, the reasons such as the leaders' not asking the opinions of subordinates, having unclear and ambiguous goals, employees' not having enough information about what the change will bring, the worry that their existing position will be damaged, and the unreliable attitudes of the leaders can lead to resistance and dissent to change.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate whether school administrators' leadership styles predict resistance to change and organizational dissent according to the perceptions of teachers working in public primary schools. Answers to the following sub-questions were sought for this purpose.

According to the perceptions of teachers;

1. Is there a significant relationship between school administrators' leadership styles and organizational dissent? Do the school administrators' leadership styles predict organizational dissent levels of teachers?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the school administrators' leadership styles and resistance to change in schools? Do school administrators' leadership styles predict the level of resistance to change in schools?

## Method

### Research Model

Correlational survey model was used in this research which examines the relationship of school administrators' leadership styles with resistance to change and organizational dissent according to the teachers' perceptions. In the correlational survey model, it is tried to determine whether there is covariance between two or more variables and the degree of covariance (Karasar, 2005). Further, if it is aimed in correlational research to learn what people think, the target people should directly be asked for their opinions (Christensen, Johnson, and Turner, 2015). Accordingly, the opinions of the teachers were taken with the measurement tools, and then, the relations between these opinions were tried to be revealed.

### Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of teachers working in the central districts of Mersin (Akdeniz, Mezitli, Toroslar and Yenişehir) in the 2018-2019 academic year. The sample of the study consisted of all teachers in the school at the time of data collection from 13,134 teachers working in public primary schools in Mersin (MoNE, 2019).

In this population, 603 teachers were surveyed face-to face. However, 520 of them returned the survey. 15 of them were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete forms. The data were obtained from 505 teachers by non-proportional sampling (293 female (58%) and 212 male (42%) teachers). The sample size of this study is of 95% confidence level and 5% error range according to the sample calculation for the population with a certain number (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

### Data Collection Tools

Data collection form was comprised of four parts: Personal Information Form, Leadership Style Scale, Organizational Dissent Scale and Resistance to Change Scale

**Leadership Style Scale:** This scale aims to determine the opinions of the participants about the management behaviours of school administrators in their schools. The second part of the "Leadership Style Scale" developed by Taş, Çelik and Tomul (2007) contains 59 items related to "autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational and transactional" leadership styles. Items were arranged as a five-point scale: "Always" (4.21-5.00), "Mostly" (3.41-4.20), "Sometimes" (2.61-3.40), "Rarely" (1.81-2.60), "None" (1.00-1.80). For the reliability of the scale, the internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) coefficient was calculated as .87.

Three dimensions of the Leadership Style Scale were taken in this study: Autocratic leadership (Items 1-10), democratic leadership (Items 11-23) and transformational leadership (Items 24-38). In this study, the internal consistency coefficient for each sub-dimension was .88 for autocratic, .72 for democratic, and .90 for transformational leadership.

**Organizational Dissent Scale:** "Organizational Dissent Scale" was used to determine the dissenting behaviours for change in schools. The scale developed by Kassing (2000) in English was adapted to Turkish by Dağlı (2015). For the adaptation, the two-dimensional and original scale was translated from English to Turkish, and then translated back into English. The final Turkish form was achieved after making the

necessary corrections. The Turkish and original forms were applied to a group of teachers in a two-week period, and it was observed that there was a highly significant relationship ( $r=.976$ ,  $p=.000$ ) between the two forms. Thus, linguistic equivalence was supposed to be ensured. The final version of the scale consists of 15 items and they were arranged as a five-point scale: Always (4.21-5.00), Frequently (3.41-4.20), Sometimes (2.61-3.40), Rarely (1.81-2.60) and Never (1.00-1.80) In order to determine the reliability of the scale, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .84 for the whole scale. In addition, the internal consistency coefficient was found to be .79 for the "Vertical Dissent" dimension and .82 for the "Horizontal Dissent" dimension. In this study, internal consistency coefficient for reliability measurement was determined as .93 for the whole scale, .77 for vertical dissent sub-dimension and .73 for horizontal dissent sub-dimension.

**Resistance to Change Scale:** "Resistance to Change Scale" (17 items) developed by Oreg (2003) was used to determine the resistance to change in schools. International validity of the scale was done simultaneously with 4.201 participants from 17 countries (Bayazit adapted in Turkish) by Oreg, Bayazit, Vakola, Arciniega, Armenakis and Barkauskiene (2008). Internal consistency coefficients of the scale varied between .72 and .85 in 17 countries and the mean was .80. The scale consists of four sub-dimensions: Routine seeking (items 1-5), Emotional reaction (items 6-9), Short-term focus (items 10-13) and Cognitive rigidity (items 14-17). In this study, internal consistency coefficients were calculated as .73 in all sub-dimensions.

**Analysis**

Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship of school administrators' leadership styles with resistance to change and organizational dissent according to the teachers' perceptions. Also, multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the predictive level of school administrators' leadership styles on resistance to change and organizational dissent. Before multiple regression analysis, assumptions for regression were tested. normality test was performed and the data showed a normal distribution (Skewness-Kurtosis/Standard Error = +/-3). In addition, no colinearity was found between sub-dimensions of leadership styles, which is independent variable of the study. The data set also included no outliers. In the study, 0.05 and 0.01 were used as the level of significance.

**Findings**

In this part of the study, the findings about the relationship of the leadership styles of school administrators with resistance to change and organizational dissent from teachers' perspectives.

**Table 1.** Correlation Analysis Results for the Relationship between School Administrators' Leadership Styles and Organizational Dissent According to Teachers' Perceptions

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Sd.
Autocratic	1					2,53	,61
Democratic	-,492**	1				3,72	,70
Transformational	-,402**	,854**	1			3,62	,74
Horizontal	,012	,161**	,091*	1		3,22	,78
Vertical	,024	,085	,074	,298**	1	3,07	,82

\* $p<.05$  \*\* $p<.01$

According to Table 1, autocratic leadership does not have a significant relationship with horizontal dissent ( $r=.012$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and vertical dissent ( $r=.024$ ,  $p>.05$ ), which are sub-dimensions of organizational dissent.

On the other hand, there is a positive and significant relationship between democratic leadership and horizontal dissent ( $r=.161$ ,  $p<.01$ ). However, there is no significant relationship between the democratic leadership and the vertical dissent ( $r=.085$ ,  $p>.05$ ).



Similar to democratic leadership, there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and horizontal dissent ( $r=.091$ ,  $p<.05$ ) while there is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and vertical dissent ( $r=.074$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

**Table 2.** Multiple Regression Analysis Results Regarding the Prediction of School Administrators' Leadership Styles on Organizational Dissent Level

Organizational Dissent	Vertical				Horizontal			
	Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	T	B	SE	$\beta$
Constant	2,225	,344	-	6,437	1,942	,323	-	6,011
Autocratic	,116	,069	,087	1,700	,161	,064	,125	2,499
Democratic	,150	,104	,129	1,435	,421	,098	,378	4,286
Transformational	-,002	,094	-,001	-,017	-,192	,088	-,182	-2,170
	R= ,114		$R^2= ,013$		R= ,214		$R^2= ,046$	
	$F_{(3)} = 2,185$				$F_{(3)} = 8,059$			
	p>.05				p<.05			

Table 2 shows that the three sub-dimensions of the leadership styles of school administrators are not predictive of “vertical dissent” ( $R=.114$ ,  $R^2=.013$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

On the other hand, three sub-dimensions of the leadership styles of school administrators have a low and significant relationship with “horizontal dissent” ( $R=.214$ ,  $R^2=.046$ ,  $p<.000$ ). Leadership scale sub-dimensions scores explain 4.6% of the horizontal dissent variance. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the relative importance order of the predictive variables on the horizontal dissent follows as democratic, transformational and autocratic leadership. Regarding the t-test results about the significance of the regression coefficients, it is seen that the three dimensions of leadership are a significant predictor of horizontal dissent.

**Table 3.** Correlation Analysis Results for the Relationship between School Administrators' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Resistance to Change

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	Sd.
Autocratic	1							2,53	,61
Democratic	-,492**	1						3,72	,70
Transformational	-,402**	,854**	1					3,62	,74
Routine Seeking	,046	-,149**	-,101*	1				2,56	,74
Emotional reaction	,090*	-,140**	-,105*	,325**	1			3,13	1,05
Short-term Focus	,088*	-,077	-,077	,355**	,380**	1		2,52	1,01
Cognitive Rigidity	-,014	,017	-,041	,067	,243**	,231**	1	3,72	,96

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

According to Table 3, the school administrators' autocratic leadership style has no significant relationship with the routine seeking ( $r=.046$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and cognitive rigidity dimensions ( $r=-.014$ ,  $p>.05$ ) of resistance to change. However, authoritarian leadership style has a positive and significant relationship with emotional reaction ( $r=.090$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and short-term focus dimensions ( $r=.088$ ,  $p<.05$ ) of resistance to change.

There is a negative and significant relationship between the school administrators' democratic leadership style and the routine seeking ( $r=-.149$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and emotional reaction ( $r=-.140$ ,  $p<.01$ ) dimensions of resistance to change. On the other hand, democratic leadership style has no significant relationship with short term focus ( $r=-.077$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and cognitive rigidity dimensions ( $r=.017$ ,  $p>.05$ ) of resistance to change.

There is a negative and significant relationship between the school administrators' transformational leadership style and the routine seeking ( $r=-.101, p<.05$ ) and emotional reaction ( $r=-.105, p<.05$ ) dimensions of resistance to change. However, transformational leadership style has no significant relationship with short term focus ( $r=-.077, p>.05$ ) and cognitive rigidity dimensions ( $r=-.041, p>.05$ ) of resistance to change.

**Table 4.** Multiple Regression Analysis Results Regarding the Prediction of School Administrators' Leadership Styles on Teachers' Resistance to Change

Resistance to Change Variable	Routine seeking				Emotional Reaction				Short-term Focus				Cognitive Rigidity			
	B	SE	$\beta$	T	B	SE	$\beta$	T	B	SE	$\beta$	T	B	SE	$\beta$	T
Constant	3,309	,309	-	10,708	3,697	,439	-	8,420	2,496	,425	-	5,879	3,722	,403	-	9,240
Autocratic	-,046	,062	-,038	-,751	,047	,088	,027	,538	,112	,085	068	1,323	-,004	,080	-,002	-,046
Democratic	-,265	,094	-,252	-2,822	-,252	,113	-,169	-1,890	-,004	,129	-,003	-,029	,261	,122	,192	2,136
Transformational	,098	,085	,098	1,159	,071	,120	,050	,591	-,065	,116	-,048	-,562	-,265	,110	-,205	-2,406
	R=,161		R <sup>2</sup> =,026		R=,144		R <sup>2</sup> =,0021		R=,099		R <sup>2</sup> =,010		R=,108		R <sup>2</sup> =,012	
	F <sub>(1)</sub> =4,426				F <sub>(1)</sub> =3,549				F <sub>(1)</sub> = 1,668				F <sub>(1)</sub> = 1,989			
	p<.05				p<.05				p>.05				p>.05			

It is seen in Table 4 that the leadership styles of school administrators have a low level and significant relationship with “routine seeking” scores of resistance to change ( $R=.161, R^2 =.026, p<.000$ ). Leadership styles scores explain 2.6% of the variance in routine seeking. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the relative importance order of the predictive variables on the routine seeking follows as leadership. Regarding the t-test results about the significance of the regression coefficients, it is seen that transformational and autocratic leadership styles are not a significant predictor of routine seeking while democratic leadership is.

The leadership styles of school administrators have a low level and significant relationship with “emotional reaction” scores of resistance to change ( $R=.144, R^2 =.021, p<.000$ ). Leadership styles scores explain 2.1% of the variance in emotional reaction. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the relative importance order of the predictive variables on emotional reaction follows as leadership. Regarding the t-test results about the significance of the regression coefficients, it is seen that all of the three leadership styles are not a significant predictor of emotional reaction.

The leadership styles of school administrators do not significantly predict the “short-term focus” ( $R=.099, R^2=.021, p>.05$ ) and “cognitive rigidity” ( $R=.108, R^2=.012, p>.05$ ) scores of resistance to change.

### Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

In this study, the relationship of school administrators’ leadership styles with teachers’ resistance to change and organizational dissent was examined based on the perceptions of teachers working in public elementary schools. The results of the research and discussions about the results are included in this section.

It is remarkable that there was found no relationship between autocratic leadership and sub-dimensions of organizational dissent. On the other hand, democratic and transformational leadership styles have a positive significant relationship with horizontal dissent although they have no significant relationship with the vertical dissent. Similar to the findings of this study on the relationship between autocratic leadership and organizational dissent, the level of organizational dissent of teachers was found quite low in the research conducted by Yıldız (2014) on teachers working in primary schools. Dağlı and Ağalday (2015) also found in their study conducted with secondary school teachers that teachers occasionally oppose against the administrator behaviours. It can be said in the light of all these findings that teachers do not take actions such as stating opinions, expressing opposing views, asking questions and questioning on the policies and the

functioning of the school. Although organizational dissent creates a negative connotation as an expression of disagreement or opposing ideas, it is crucial in organizational communication (Ötken and Cenkci, 2013). When the teachers express opposing views, question or criticize organizational policies, the fact that their ideas are ignored by the management or the leader may lead to the dissenting behaviours to die away over time, and in some cases, low commitment to their schools as well as alienation and burnout as a result of the possibility of mobbing due to the opposition. An employee in this situation should not be expected to contribute to the organization, to himself/herself or to the administrator. However, organizational dissent is essential for organizational development, identifying and solving the problems in the organization (Kassing, 2002). At the same time, the opportunity of the employees to express their opinions freely, even if they are in the opposite view, will contribute to the adoption of the decisions by the employees and to adapt to the changes to be made.

According to the results of the research, teachers who see their school principals as autocratic act completely neutral in dissenting, teachers who perceive their principals as democratic and transformational are observed to feel comfortable in expressing their opinions. These behaviours of teachers can be explained by the fact that autocratic leaders see themselves as the only authority in decision making, do not consult their employees and care about their ideas. Democratic and transformational leaders, on the other hand, apply the opposite of the behaviours adopted by the autocratic leader against their employees. It was revealed in a study that, when administrators want teachers to take ethical and illegal actions, it causes teachers to demonstrate dissenting behaviours against the bully and unfair behaviours of administrators (Özdemir, 2013). According to Ötken and Cenkci (2013), extroverted, responsible and organized people exerted dissenting behaviours while the ones who were compatible, avoiding conflict, and tolerant were observed to be unable to exhibit dissenting behaviours even if they were dissatisfied with the situation. In another study, it was revealed that organizational members avoided dissenting behaviours against their administrators and had a concern that they would be harmed (Özdemir, 2013). Accordingly, the findings in the literature match with the findings of this study. As a result, it is seen that teachers are shy in dissenting at schools. On the other hand, given the effect of leadership styles of school administrators on organizational dissent, it is seen that leadership styles predict organizational dissent at a low level. Considering the international studies, the reasons of the teacher dissent are the different wage policies (USA), the existence of over-centralized and controlling practices (South Africa), the low-wage policy (African countries), and the dissenting behaviours as a support to the families of poor students (Mexico) (Chisholm, 1999; Cligget & Wyssmann, 2009; Favela, 2010; Kirk, 2009). It is seen in these studies that organizational dissent behaviours are examined at macro level, that is, there is a limited number of studies on teacher-leader relationship and reflections of organizational dissent to schools. Today, organizations need open communication environment and the employees who can express their ideas clearly, and at this point, the organizational dissent becomes crucial. Organizations that can properly use organizational dissent and manage it correctly will be able to respond to the needs of the time and adapt to the changes occurring more quickly.

According to another finding obtained in the research, autocratic leadership has no significant relationship with routine seeking and cognitive rigidity dimensions of resistance to change, however, it has a positive significant relationship with emotional reaction and short-term focus of resistance to change. In addition, democratic and transformational leadership have negative significant relationship with routine seeking and emotional reaction dimensions of resistance to change while they have no significant relationship with short-term focus and cognitive rigidity of resistance to change. Change is a complex process with many factors. Organizational employees can resist to change for various reasons such as uncertainties, economic conditions, giving up habits, group pressure and fear of failure (Bruckman, 2008; Griffin and Moorhead, 2010; Lunenburg, 2010; Sabuncuoğlu and Tuz, 1995; Trader-Leigh, 2002). It has been emphasized in many studies that organization leaders play an important role in managing organizational change and resistance to change (Burnes and Todnem, 2012; Luecke, 2009; Martincic, 2010). These studies suggest that the effectiveness of the

organization leader is of primary importance in managing a successful organizational change. The leader of the organization can overcome resistance to change with various strategies such as establishing effective communication, involving the employees in the change process, understanding the concerns and fears of the employees through empathy, or explaining the change process in different ways to those who show high resistance (İnandı, Tunç, and Gılıç, 2013).

According to the findings of the study and the literature, it can be said that there is a high resistance to change in the organizations where democratic leadership behaviours are often observed. This result can be explained by the fact that the teachers think of the possibility that the democratic atmosphere will disappear. In organizations with autocratic leadership behaviour, it can be argued that resistance to change behaviour is less because the employees are afraid of the leader and abstain from expressing their opinions (Özdemir, 2013).

In the study by Helvacı, Çankaya and Bostancı (2012), conducted with educational supervisors to determine the reasons of teachers' resistance to change, school leaders were found to be unable to manage change. At the same time, considering the effect of school principals' leadership styles on resistance to change, it is seen that leadership styles do not predict much the resistance to change. In general terms, regardless of the subject of change, resistance to change is inevitable due to negative thoughts and concerns, giving up habits and uncertainties (Benfari, 2013; Hultman, 1998, Jung, Chow, and Wu, 2003; Martincic, 2010).

As in every organization, change is constantly occurring in schools as an inevitable process. However, people may not always be prepared for unexpected events, different things or surprises in many aspects of life. Employees, who are especially cognitively rigid about certain situations in organizations, may want the routine to continue in the process of the work. When faced with change, employees in the organization may fear uncertainties, show emotional reactions, experience stress, and worry about the deterioration of the existing order and status quo. At this point, the attitudes and behaviours displayed by the leader can help the process proceed more healthily. Factors such as the attitude of the leader, sharing the reason for the change process with the relevant stakeholders, being aware of the fact that change is a natural phenomenon, managing the process in a more democratic way, and involving the members of the organization in the process will increase the acceptability of the change by the employees. School principals must manage the dissent and conflict in a functional way, particularly during the change process they want to achieve in their school. Necessary seminars or in-service trainings should be given to school principals by the Ministry of National Education on many subjects such as leadership, change and conflict management skills, organizational trust, school climate, effective communication skills, and school principals should be encouraged to apply the skills they have acquired through these trainings in their schools.

In this study, the relationship of school administrators' leadership styles with organizational dissent and resistance to change was examined. It is assumed that if the relationship of resistance to change and organizational dissent with organizational commitment, organizational culture and organizational citizenship can be investigated, they will have positive reflections on educational organizations.

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