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Power Sources Used by School Principals: A Mixed-Method Study*

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This study has been conducted through mixed-method approach to investigate the views of school principals and teachers regarding the power sources preferred by the principals. The study uses sequential explanatory design. First, quantitative data on teachers' perceptions of power sources is obtained from 320 secondary school teachers. After the analysis of quantitative data, qualitative data is obtained through interviews with six secondary school principals and six teachers in order to provide an in-depth analysis of the quantitative data. The analyses of the teachers' views on power sources demonstrate that school principals use legitimate power, reward power, and expert power at most; they use charismatic power moderately and coercive power at least. The results are consistent with quantitative findings of the research. This study shows that diverse power sources, instead of relying on authority, make a positive impact on teachers' performance. Therefore, informing school principals about the power sources is vital for an effective administration.

Keywords: Power sources, School principal, Teacher authority, School administration

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Introduction

Power sources used by school principals is a significant factor in influencing the school shareholders and directing them to the aim. School principals commonly use their authority in the execution of the educational activities. However, today in order to meet the necessities of our time and ensure quality in education, it is not enough to use their authority, solely. Apart from the legitimate power the school principals hold, school principals' guidance and influence on the teachers via their expert and charismatic powers, which are called personal power sources, plays an important role in enhancing the efficiency of education.

According to the studies, (Özcanay, 2017; Taş, 2017; Yılmaz and Altinkurt, 2011; Yorulmaz, 2014) the school administrators in Turkey mostly use the legitimate power they hold as a result of their position and do not prefer to influence the teachers. This result reveals that the conventional understanding of management continues to prevail in schools and the school administrators do not use the power sources effectively. Therefore, informing the administrators about the power sources and their effective use is required to ensure the effectiveness of the education process.

The school principal's guiding the teachers by using various power sources helps keep to the teachers motivated and do their job with love. In their studies, Pierro Raven, Amato and Bélanger (2013) conclude that the use of various power sources promote the individuals' commitment to the organization. Likewise, various studies reveal that teacher motivation and commitment has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the education (Ada, Akın, Ayık, Yıldırım and Yalçın, 2013; Özgan and Aslan, 2008; Ünal, 2000).

Power is obtained through various sources. Individuals can supply the power through the position they hold, their expertise, knowledge or physical appearance (Hunt, 1996: 89). French and Raven (1959) focus on the power types between people and define mainly five types of power. These power sources include legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power and charismatic power. *Legitimate power*, is defined as the capability of the administrator in an organization to affect the behavior of the other individuals as a result of the position held in the organizational hierarchy (Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman, 1995:500). Legitimate power represents the formal authority for the use and the control of the organizational sources, which is given as a result of the structural position in the organization, or in other words the official power (Robbins and Judge, 2013: 422; Şimşek and Çelik, 2017: 63). Reward power is the capability of the administrator to award those individuals who perform well and obey the rules (Hodgetts, 1997: 111; Lunenburg, 2012), and is based on the perception that the individuals within the organization are awarded by their administrators when they do the expected behavior. While using reward power, administrators generally make use of wage, promotion, incentive fee or appreciation (Rahim, 2009: 255, 226) and the power of the administrator is based on his supervision on the reward mechanisms (Hunt, 1996:92). *Coercive power* is the authority of an individual to punish others (Daft, 2015: 266) and the administrators in the organizations tend to control punishment using coercive power; therefore, the other individuals in the organization abide by the administrators as they fear from the punishments (Bateman and Snell, 2016: 235) The punishments given to the individuals by an administrator using coercive power include downgrading, appointing to an undesirable job, laying off or leaving deprived of any compliments and good will (George and Jones, 2012: 400) *Expert power* is based on a special talent, expertise or knowledge (Szilagyi and Wallace, 1990: 337). Expert power is the ability to control the behavior of others by means of any knowledge, experience or judgement missing in other individuals and which they feel in need of (Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborn and Uhl-Bien, 2010: 285). *Charismatic power* is the ability of an individual to affect the

behavior of others on condition that he is liked or loved by them (Hellriegel et al., 1995: 502). The individuals in an organization tend to trust and admire an administrator with a charismatic power (Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer, 1979), and try to resemble him or identify with him as a result of this respect and admiration (Lunenburg, 2012; Daft, 2015: 266).

Power is a significant instrument in organizations which unite the individuals towards a specific goal while also providing them with guidance and ensuring continuity within the administration (Yücel, 1999). The effective administration of the schools is based on the school administrator's style of using the power source he owns (Aslanargun, 2014: 109). As the use of the power sources in schools have a significant effect on the individuals' behavior, there is an increase observed in the number of the studies carried out in Turkey on the schools administrator's use of power (Atmaca, 2014; Baydemir 2016; Demir, 2017; Demirel 2012; Diş, 2015; Karaman, 2015; Kayalı, 2011; Kılınç, Araşkal and Kutlu, 2018; Koşar and Çalık, 2011; Memduhoğlu and Turhan, 2016; Nartgün, Nartgün and Arıcı, 2016; Özcanay, 2017; Özhan, 2016; Pamuk, 2018; Pars, 2017; Uğur, 2018; Yılmaz and Altinkurt, 2011; Yorulmaz, 2014). The studies on the power sources used by the school administrators reveal that the use of the power sources not only ensures the effective administration of the school but also enhances the motivation of the teachers in the school whereby it has a positive impact on the school's success. Therefore, the views of teachers and school principals on the use of power and accurate use of the power sources arise as a significant problem. Thus, the questions posed within the framework of this research are as follows:

1. According to the teachers, what is the extent of the school principals to use the legitimate power, coercive power, reward power, charismatic power and expert power?
2. What are the views of the school principals and teachers on the power source used by the school principals?

Method

As the mixed-method is a research approach where both the qualitative and the quantitative data are obtained and analyzed in a holistic view (Creswell and Clark, 2015: 4), the research design is based on mixed method. In sequential explanatory design, which is one of mixed-method designs, the purpose is to gather data through quantitative methods and thereafter to use quantitative methods to provide in depth explanations with respect to the obtained results (Creswell, 2017: 3, 6); therefore, sequential explanatory design is used in this research to provide an in-depth analysis on the views of the teachers and the school principals. In the quantitative stage of the research, survey model is used to identify the teacher views on the power sources used by the school principals. Survey model is a kind of research approach which aims to describe the present case as it applies (Karasar, 2014: 77). In the research, conducted through mixed-method, phenomenology design is used to gather quantitative data in order to analyze the qualitative data in depth. As the phenomenology design is related to the perceptions and the attitudes of a person and the way it is described by them (Patton, 2018: 104), phenomenology design is used in the research and it is aimed to reveal the perceptions and experience of the teachers as well as the school principals on the power phenomenon.

The Universe, Sample and the Study Group

The universe of the qualitative research is composed of 1219 teachers working in 23 public secondary schools located in Efeler district in the province of Aydın. The sample of the research includes 320

teachers identified through random sampling, who work in the secondary schools determined through stratified sampling. In order to carry out an in-depth analysis of the problem status and generalize the obtained results, the teachers working in the Science High Schools, Anatolian High Schools, Fine Arts High Schools, Social Sciences High Schools, İmam Hatip High Schools as well as Vocational and Technical High Schools which fall into the category of official secondary schools located in Efeler district in the province of Aydın are included in the sample through stratified sampling. The information on the teachers constituting the sample of the research such as gender, school type, branch, education status, professional seniority and the length of service in the school are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Personal and professional information on participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	195	51.6
	Male	183	48.4
	Total	378	100.0
Type of the School	Science High School	15	4.0
	Anatolian High School	143	37.8
	Social Sciences High School	11	2.9
	İmam Hatip High School	30	7.9
	Vocational High School	170	45.0
	Fine Arts High School	9	2.4
Branch	In-field teacher	302	79.9
	Vocational field teacher	76	20.1
	Total	378	100.0
Education Status	Undergraduate degree	341	90.2
	Graduate degree	37	9.8
	Total	378	100.0
Professional Seniority	Between 0-10 years	26	6.9
	Between 11-21 years	145	38.4
	22 years and above	207	54.8
	Total	378	100.0
Length of Service in the School	Between 0-5 years	126	33.3
	Between 6-11 years	150	39.7
	12 years and above	102	27.0
	Total	378	100.0

On the quantitative stage of the research, the study group is determined through maximum variation sampling. The study group determined through maximum variation sampling in order to represent all of the state-governed secondary schools is composed of a teacher and a school principal chosen from Science High School, Anatolian High School, Social Sciences High School, İmam Hatip High School as well as Vocational and Technical High School. Another type of sampling used to determine the study group in the study is criterion sampling. The teachers with five or more years of service in the school are included within the study through criterion sampling. The reason why this criterion is determined is the fact that teachers with five or more years of service are likely to have an experience of the power sources used by the school principal. The interviews are conducted with six teachers and six school principals in total, where a teacher and a school principal is chosen on voluntary basis from each school type. The school principals included in the study are composed of five males and a female while the teachers are composed of three males and three females. The professional seniority of the school principals ranges between 15 and 31 years while the professional seniority of teachers ranges between 13 and 28 years. The years of service in the school of school principals range between 2 and 8 years while years of service of teachers range between 5 and 10.

Data Collection Instruments

Organizational Power Scale at Schools (OPSS) developed by Altinkurt and Yılmaz (2013) is used to gather data on the quantitative stage of the research. The first section of the scale includes general information on the scale in addition to personal information about participants while the second stage includes 40 questions posed to assess the power sources used by school principals. The Organizational Power Scale at Schools, a 5 point Likert Scale, discusses power sources on five dimensions such as legitimate power, coercive power, reward power, expert power and charismatic power. The reliability coefficients of the factors range between 0.83 and 0.94 in each dimension in the reliability study conducted by Altinkurt and Yılmaz (2013) to ensure the reliability of the scale used in the research. The research also included the reliability analysis of Organizational Power Scale at Schools and the Cronbach alpha value is found to be .86. In terms of the dimensions, Cronbach's alpha value is found to be .74 on legitimate power, .86 on reward power, .88 on coercive power, .92 on expert power and .94 on charismatic power. Having a Cronbach alpha value above .70, it can be concluded that the scale used is a reliable measurement instrument (DeVellis, 2012).

On the quantitative stage of the research, the interview technique is used where questions on sub-problems are posed in order to reveal the attitude, opinion and experience of the teachers and the school principals (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016: 130). The semi-structured interview form is developed to provide parallel comparison by the researcher between the views of the teachers and the school principals by also using the findings obtained from the analysis of the quantitative data as well as to verify the data obtained. The questions prepared were subject to an expert consideration to ensure internal validity. The interview questions and the data obtained from the pilot study were analyzed by the field expert and the expression misunderstood or incomprehensible by the teachers were eliminated. In order to provide consistency, the codes made by the researcher right after the interview were also checked by the field expert.

Data Analysis

On the quantitative stage of the research, prior to the data analysis, normality tests were conducted by taking into consideration the coefficient of kurtosis and skewness and the normal distribution was obtained by leaving out the outliers. Descriptive analysis with respect the power sources in the research including legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power and charismatic power dimensions and the average and standard deviations for each dimension were calculated. The significance level was taken to be .05 in the assessment of the findings obtained. In the assessment phase the group width value on the scale was taken as $4/5=.80$. Thus, the values between 1.00-1.80 were considered to be “very-low” and the values between 1.81-2.60 were considered to be “low” while the values between 2.61-3.40 were considered to be “average”; the values between 3.41-4.20 were considered to be “high” and the values between 4.21-5.00 were considered to be “very-high” (Büyüköztürk, 2016).

Data analysis on the quantitative dimension of the research was conducted through content analysis. Content analysis is to gather similar data obtained within the framework of specific concepts and to arrange them in a comprehensible way for the reader in order to be able to explain the data obtained (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016: 242-243). The interviews conducted on voluntary basis lasted for approximately 25-35 minutes. The audio recordings taken during the interviews were transformed into texts in computer environment in the texts, the five dimensions in the scale used which are also given in the French and Raven’s (1959) five forms of power, were used as themes. These themes are legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power and charismatic power. Under these themes, the cohesive expressions repeated in the texts were coded. The texts coded were checked by the field experts and necessary corrections were made. Following this the findings were interpreted based on the given codes. Also, direct expressions of the participants in the interviews were also shared with the reader. The data obtained as a result of the interviews in the research were coded separately at different times by the researcher and the field expert and the codes given were compared.

Findings

This part of the study includes the views of school principals and teachers about the power sources used by school principals. The views are given both in quantitative and qualitative data. The descriptive analysis of the sub-dimensions of the power sources with the aim of identifying the extent of the use of legitimate power, coercive power, reward power, charismatic power and expert power by the school principals, is given in Table 2.

Table 2: The Statistics Pertaining to the Teacher Views on the School Principals’ Extent of Using Power Sources

Power Sources	N	\bar{x}	S
Legitimate Power	378	3.94	.65
Reward Power	378	3.51	.79
Coercive Power	378	2.40	.79
Expert Power	378	3.84	.76
Charismatic Power	378	3.29	.90

The table above shows that according to the teachers, school principals tend to use legitimate power ($\bar{x}=3.94$), reward power ($\bar{x}=3.51$) and expert power ($\bar{x}=3.84$) on high levels while they use charismatic power ($\bar{x}=3.29$) and coercive power ($\bar{x}=2.40$) on average terms. Based on the findings obtained, it can be concluded that school principals use legitimate power at most, which is followed by expert power and they prefer to use coercive power at least.

The views of teachers and school principals on the use of power sources by school principals were revealed as a result of the findings obtained during the quantitative dimension of the research. The views of the teachers and the school principals on the use of power sources by school principals are given in Figure 1 below.

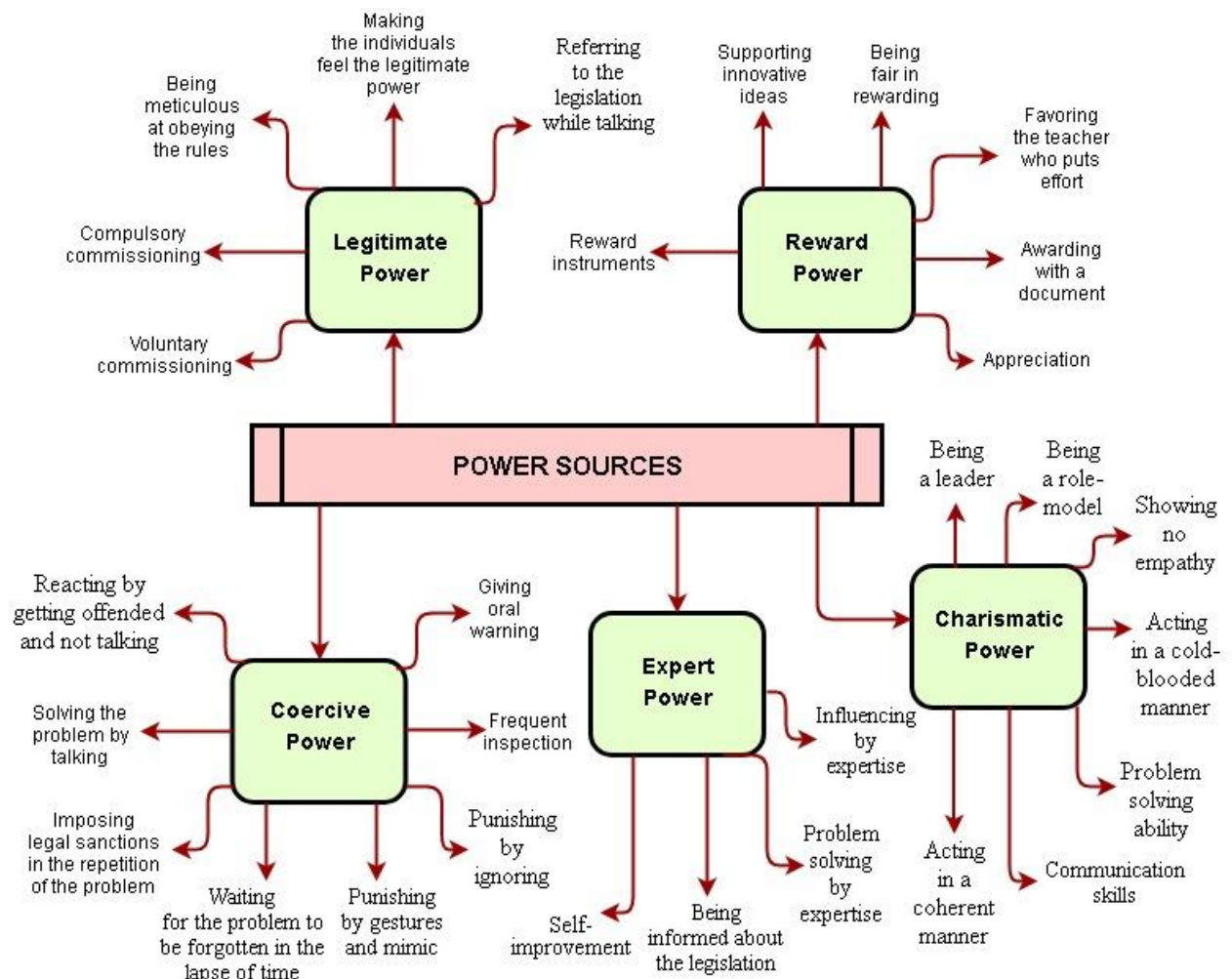


Figure 1. *The Views of Teachers and School Principals on the Use of Power Sources by School Principals*

Both teachers and school principals participating the research stated that school principals tend not to refer to the legislation very often during their talks and prefer to use daily language instead. Some teachers marked that school legislation is reminded only during the meetings or school activities and added that apart from this the school principal has the things done via requests. School principals expressed that they make the teachers feel their legitimate power and thereby maintain discipline.

They stated that even though tasks are assigned on voluntary basis, they also inform teachers through official writing and teachers are made responsible for doing the task.

Both the school principals and teachers involved in the study stated that school principals frequently used appreciation. The teachers also declared that they are generally appreciated during activities and on special days when they are together with the other teachers and students. Whereas the school principals stated that they often award the teachers with a certificate, most of the teachers declared that appreciation is more often preferred when compared to rewarding. When teachers are asked if they are treated fair by their school principals in the rewarding process, most of the teachers emphasized that everyone who puts real effort are rewarded. Most of the school principals stated that they assign the teachers who put effort to better classes, leave the day they wanted off in their programs and have them on duty on good places. Regarding this, a school principal shared the following:

“Yes, I favor them. I personally plan their programs in the beginning of the year. I give the best classes of the school. I do whatever they ask for. And I do not feel I am being unfair by doing so... For instance, there is a problem in his program, I try to solve it. (P1)”

With respect to the coercive power, most of the school principals and teachers stated that school principals are more inclined to solve the problems at school by talking. Most of the school principals underlined that they invited the teacher to talk one to one and try to find out the reason of the problem when they observe an undesired behavior. One of the school principals expressed that when he notices a teacher, who does not put much effort for the school, arrive late for the class or fail to carry out a certain task, he throws a glance at the teacher negatively and prefer to punish her by using his body language. With respect to this, a school principal said the following:

“There is a history teacher at our school. He has the students practice folk dances after school. He sacrifices from his own holidays to have the students practice. When this teacher is five minutes late for the school, I just look at the corner of my eye (he tolerates it). But there is another man. He does not provide any support at school. When he is late even for one second, let alone five minutes, I ill-treat him. I hurt him with my eyes. I do not say anything to the teacher when I get angry with him. I walk in a crowd where is also present, shake hands with all teachers and pass by him. (P1)”

One of the school principals said he prefers not to solve a problem he faces with the teacher at that very moment or talk with him about the problem and wait for the problem to be forgotten in the lapse of time. He associates this with the fact that the teacher tends to overreact when you interfere with him right after the problem arises causing the arguments getting worse. During the interviews, a teacher said the school principal continuously walks through the corridors and drops by the teacher's room and gives oral warning. Another teacher said the school principal gets offended and prefers not to be in contact with the teacher instead of solving the problem by talking.

With respect to the use of expert power, the school principals expressed that they improve themselves in the field of management to become an expert in that particular field. Some of the school principals said they read books on management sciences, attend seminars and conferences or start a master's program on educational administration. Regarding this, a school principal said:

"I had my master's degree on educational administration. If you are an administrator, it is a must for you to learn and improve yourself about the field. It is beneficial to know the related theories. This is because sometimes you get confused and you refer to them... Apart from this, I follow the related literature. (P3)"

Teachers also expressed that their school principals improve themselves to become an expert in administration, read books about the field and attend seminars. A school principal said his being informed and an expert in the field guides the teacher and this affects the teacher positively. School principals said they can solve the problems related to the legislation using their expertise in the field. With respect to this, a school principal said the following:

"The teacher sees you as a guide in that field because you are an expert. In the field of education or in any other field, they solve this problem... When there is something teachers get confused about the legislation, they consult me. Perhaps I do not know everything, but I do know researching. (P2)"

Most of the teachers said their school principal influences them with his expertise. Teachers expressed that their school principals' expertise has an impact on the way he provides guidance, consultation and orientation. With respect to the charismatic power, school principals expressed that it is important to be a role model for the teacher as well as being a leader and added that it is necessary to have problem-solving skills and communication skills in addition to ensuring consistency in attitudes and being a charismatic administrator. School principals stated that it is necessary to get officially dressed to be a charismatic leader and also underlined that it is imperative the school principal stands as an example for the teachers in his manners, behavior and talks. Some of the school principals stated that the ability to solve problems at school in a cold-blooded manner is imperative in the use of charismatic power. Some of the teachers stated that school principals stand as an example and have problem-solving and communication skills. A teacher underlined that the school principal is a charismatic administrator with his stance, talks and persuasive ability are considered and added that he is able to influence the teachers. However, some of the teachers expressed that their school principals do not display any qualifications of leadership; thus they fail to influence them. Some teachers stated that their school principal is not a charismatic leader and does not show empathy towards teachers.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This research aims to reveal the views of the school principals and teachers with respect to the power sources used by school principals. This research is expected to contribute to the identification of the competences required to be owned by a school principal as well as achieving a better administration at schools. As the power sources used by school principals have a direct impact on the school administration and the quality of education, this research is believed to be beneficial for the identification of the policies to be followed while choosing and training the school administrators.

In this study which aims to identify the power sources used by school principals, it is revealed that school principals use legitimate power at most, which is followed by expert power and prefer to use the coercive power at least. Similar to the results of this study, Deniz and Çolak (2008), Altinkurt, Yılmaz, Erol and Salalı (2014), Özcan, Karataş, Çağlar and Polat (2014), Titrek and Zafer (2009), Uğurlu

and Demir (2016), Yılmaz and Altinkurt (2011) and Yorulmaz (2014) also concluded in their studies that school principals prefer to use legitimate power at most. Besides this, it is concluded in the studies of Aslanargun (2011), Atmaca (2014), Diş (2015), Kayalı (2011), Memduhoğlu and Turhan (2016) and Polat (2010) that school administrators tend to use coercive power at least.

School organizations are based on an authoritarian and bureaucratic structure (Hoy and Miskel, 2015: 120). Education organizations with a dominant centralistic approach tend to have a vertical organizational structure as well as an authoritarian structure. At school, the school principal holds the power and this power of the school administrator depends on the laws. Therefore, school principals use their legitimate power when they implement the administrative issues (Özdemir, 2018: 157). Hence, it can be concluded that as a result of the bureaucratic structure at schools, teachers are of the opinion that school principals use the legitimate power at most when compared to all other powers.

At the end of the research, the findings put forward that the power used the least by school principals is coercive power. The answers given by the teachers to the interview questions at the quantitative phase of the research also support these findings. Only a few of the teachers expressed that school principals control the teachers, react by getting offended and give oral warnings in the use of the coercive power. Apart from this, most of the teachers stated that school principals try to find a solution by talking in the case of a problem. Based on the teachers' views, it can be concluded that school principals act in a mild manner, seek a settlement and avoid using coercive power as much as possible.

Giving punishments does not always make a positive impact on the individuals in the organization. Therefore, while using coercive power on teachers, a school principal also needs to pay attention to the fact that they are not getting demotivated (Öğüt, Akgemci and Demirel, 2004). Rahim and Afza (1993) concluded that job satisfaction in individuals decreases as a result of the use of coercive power. Özdemir (2013) suggested that the inner motivation of teachers tend to decrease as the use of coercive power by the school principals increases. Since motivation contributes directly to success (Ames, 1990), it is important that school principals ensure the motivation of teachers. Based on this research and the findings obtained the reason for the school principals to avoid using coercive power is thought to have resulted from the decrease in the teachers' motivation and commitment to work.

Based on the teacher views, it is observed that rewarding by the school principals is inadequate. According to the teachers and school principals, rewarding power is limited to appreciation only. In the study of Yılmaz (2007), it is concluded that teachers are not appreciated enough. However, rewarding the individuals in an organization can motivate them to achieve the organization's goals. The appreciation of the individuals is an important source in their motivation (Diş, 2015). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the effective use of rewarding power has a direct impact on the teacher's motivation.

School principals are required to be informed and skilled at both management theories and human relations (Grace, Buser ve Stuck, 1987; Şişman, 2011: 93; Töremen and Kolay, 2003). The expert power of a school manager depends on his interest areas and learning ability. However, the most important thing is the use of this power along with the other powers in a coherent and effective way

(Barutçugil, 2014: 61). Thus, the school principal's experience in his field is not enough for the use of expert power and it becomes more effective when the school principal can solve the problems arising at school using his expert power. According to the research results, teachers express positive opinions about the school principal's use of expert power.

The ability of the school principals to influence the teachers is associated with their efficiency in the communication process. A school principal uses his communication skill when he assigns tasks to teachers in accordance with the objectives of the school. Therefore, as a leader the school principal needs to have effective communication skills (Pricellas, Niez, Nierra and Tubis, 2016). A teacher's being willing to fulfil certain task is also achieved through the communication skills of the school principal (Özgan and Aslan, 2008). Effective administrators have the skills of building effective and solution focused relationships and being involved in interaction, listening and showing empathy with teachers, students and parents (McEwan, 2018: 3) While almost all of the school principals participating in the research defined themselves as a charismatic administrator; this is not the case with teachers. Most of the teachers expressed that school principals fail to influence them with their charisma even though they bear various characteristics of charismatic power.

Based on the results of the research, it can be suggested that in-service educational activities can be organized for school principals by the field experts with respect to their effective use of power sources, what these power sources are and how they can be more effectively used. School principals can be provided training with respect to the use of expert power and charismatic power, which are identified as personal power sources, rather than legitimate power, rewarding power and coercive power, which originate from their position. They can also be offered leadership training to use the charismatic power effectively in influencing the teachers. Besides this, the research can be enlarged by including the teachers and school principals at private schools as well as the student and parent views to the scope of the study and can be applied in various provinces or involve teachers at different education levels all around Turkey. In addition, the relation between the powers resources used by school principals and various variables (teacher motivation, teacher performance, etc.) can also be scrutinized.

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