



# Administrators' Power Usage Styles and Their Impact on the Organizational Culture in Colleges of Education: A Case Study<sup>\*</sup>

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to determine how power usage styles of administrators of faculties of education influence the organizational culture in their respective faculties in Turkey. Using the phenomenological method, a qualitative research method, researchers studied a group comprised of 20 academics from 7 different colleges of education employed during the 2011-2012 academic year. In order to select the appropriate study group, maximum variation technique was used since it is one of the purposive sampling methods. The data were gathered using semi-structured interview questions developed by the researchers themselves and were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. In this study, it was found that while the administrators of this group mostly used legal, coercive, and reward power styles, charismatic and expertise power styles did not have a significant impact on members of their respective faculties. It was further found that administrators' usage of legal, coercive, and reward power styles breed both organizational cultures of power and bureaucracy. It was concluded that, due to the lack of charismatic and expertise power styles, cultures of success and support are unable to flourish in such faculties and that there are even difficulties in setting up a fully functional bureaucratic culture. As a result of this study, the researchers have suggested that in order to develop an organizational culture with all of its necessary components in faculties of education, administrators should be assigned through democratic selection methods, that they be trained in administrators training programs, and that a peer mentoring system should be developed in faculties of education.

## Key Words

College Administrators, Faculty Members, College of Education, Organizational Culture, Power Management.

\* A part of this study was presented as an oral presentation at the 7<sup>th</sup> National Education Management Congress, May 24-26 2012, at İnönü University in Turkey.

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General in Turkey, universities prefer bureaucratic, academic and political management styles due to the cultural, economic, social, and political influences present in the environments in which they are located. The specific reality on the ground forms the power sources available for use for both the top and middle line managers in their respective universities. These power sources shape different organizational cultures at each university. With their different goals, functions, structure, and human resources, universities are complex organizational structures (Corwin, 1974; H. Şimşek, 1997), presenting themselves as one of the most important research fields in educational administration.

Expectations of efficiency that manifest in parallel with the effect of market conditions, the educational demands of society, and accountability have re-opened the debate of the role of universities (Diana, Knippenberg, & Wisse, 2012; Hesapçioğlu, 2001; Waite & Allen, 2003). This debate includes more holistic content which covers not only the very top of administrative lines, but also the deans, heads of departments, and division chairs. In recent years, several studies investigating the changing roles of faculties, departments, and divisions have been conducted (Balyer, 2011; Scholkmann, 2011; Singh & Purohit, 2011; Sullivan, 2011; Way, 2010; Zillian, 2012). At the same time, the discussion regarding the organizational structuring of colleges of education, their departments, and divisions, as well as their management styles, emphasizes the importance of administrators' power (Zillian, 2012). With this in mind, the two main sources of power used by college administrators have been found to be (1) legal power combined with the authorization of senior management, and (2) administrators' own communication skills and individual capacities. Administrators' power usage styles lead to the emergence of various organizational cultures in colleges of education, departments, and internal divisions (Corwin, 1974; Schein, 1990).

Colleges of education are the academic organizations in which teachers gain their professional identities. Thus, students should be trained not only in courses related to academic curriculum, but also those pertaining to organizational culture. Student teachers are affected positively or negatively by their respective administrators' power usage styles just as much as they are by the organizational culture and professional identity of faculty (Aguinis, Nesler, Quigley, Lee, & Tedeschi, 1996; Phelan, 2001).

### Social Power and its Sources

From an anthropological point of view, the concept of power is the basis of survival skills for individuals (Waite, 2002). Weber (1995; 2008) defines power as the competence to coerce others to work. For an administrator, it is defined as having the right to do what s/he wants even if s/he is resisted. On the other hand, power is defined both as the ability to influence others (Lunenburg, 2012) and as the ability of one's potential to change others' behaviors within any given relationship (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983; E. Yıldırım, 1998). Thanks to power, individuals are able to realize their goals by meeting their needs. The main factors affecting the quality of any relationship, ranging from families to the government or even in the global level, is power (Bayrak, 2000; French & Raven, 2001). Where management is concerned, power is the ability to direct employees to complete tasks in a correct manner at the scheduled time (Karaman, 1999).

Organizations create an environment in which cooperation among members at every level is required in order to accomplish a particular objective, thereby necessitating the exercise of power by those in higher positions to achieve certain goals (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Şahin, 2010). Administrators' power usage styles differ not only in terms of the organization's particular objectives, structure, culture, climate, and demographic characteristics, but also in terms of their social, political, economic, and cultural environments (Krackhardt, 1990; Köksal, 2011).

In the literature, several classifications have been made regarding power sources. While Robbins (1994) classifies sources of power as position, personal characteristics, expertise, and opportunities, French and Raven (2001) divide the social sources of power into five groups; namely, (1) legality, (2) rewards and (3) coercive power based on the specific manager's position, and (4) charisma and (5) expertise resulting from the manager's personal characteristics.

*Legal power* is the power given to a person due to his position in an organization and which stems from legal regulations (Robbins, 1994). Administrators affect employees through this form of power as a result of their positions (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Specifically, administrators represent formal authority (M. Ş. Şimşek, 2005) which manifests itself through its authoritarianism, status, and ability to control the distribution of rewards (Bayraktaroğlu, 2000). Subject to such power, employees are affected by their own association of administrators' power with their positions (Eraslan, 2004).

*Coercive power* is a form of power used to influence employees through the punishment of unwanted behaviors. The basis of this power is fear (Robbins, 1994), and it is related to the degree of punishment that administrators use (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2000). Punishments might come in the form of official or verbal scolding, unwanted duties, and/or strict inspection.

*Reward power* stems from the perception that employers have of their administrators in terms of their ability to use both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards to control others (Schermerhorn et al., 2000). Specifically, if an employee shows the proper behavior expected from him/her, s/he is rewarded. As such, the strength of this type of power stems from the attractiveness of the rewards and in the fairness in their distribution.

*Charismatic power* is related to administrators' personalities. A charismatic administrator is one who is modeled, respected, and envied by his/her subordinates (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). If a leader has charismatic leadership, his/her subordinates will fulfill their leaders' requests with commitment, loyalty, and respect.

*Expertise power* is the type of power that stems from a manager's knowledge, skills, and experience (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). The manager's expertise power increases as the leaders' ideas are proved successful and decreases as they make mistakes (Eraslan, 2004).

It is important to note here that power sources cannot be considered as good or bad. Power's goodness or badness can be measured in terms of its usage (Goyer, 1985). An attempt to use power outside of its appropriate context can reduce its impact (French & Raven, 2001).

### **Organizational Culture and its Types**

Culture is composed of learned behaviors and outcomes (Tezcan, 1999). Organizational culture, therefore, consists of the shared views, ideologies, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, expectations, norms (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013) and value patterns of any specific organization as well as the beliefs that promote and maintain individuals' norms and behaviors within an institution (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). In short, it is our way of doing things in our environment (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Shared values are formed just as much by the objectives, structure, socio-economic factors, and external elements effective on an organization

as they are by the attitudes, skills, and personal characteristics of its administrators (Phesey, 1993). Schein (1990) determined seven basic dimensions of organizational culture; being: (1) the organization-environment relationship, (2) human activities, (3) perception of reality, (4) time, (5) human nature, (6) human relationships, and (7) similarities between individuals within the organization.

Culture plays a key role in the realization of organizational goals. Organizational culture affects employees' problem solving abilities, productivity, motivation, commitment, and level of job satisfaction (İşcan & Timuroğlu, 2007; Lim, 1995; Polat & Meydan, 2011; Sönmez, 2006). Researchers attempting to explain organizational culture have stated that it is affected by national, local, and international cultures (Etzioni, 1961 as cited in Corwin, 1974)

In the literature, there are a variety of models investigating the analyses conducted on organizational culture. While Quinn and Mcgratt classifies organizational culture as rational, progressive, accommodating, and hierarchical (cited in Şişman, 2002), Cameron and Quinn (1999) classify it differently; specifically as: human relations, development, bureaucracy, adapting market conditions, and external environment (cited in Ergün, 2007). In Phesey's model (1993) the organizational culture consists of four different types: bureaucratic, success, support, and power culture.

*Bureaucratic culture* refers to the type of organizational culture which focuses on the integration of expectations. It is mostly seen in public institutions and large companies. This type of culture is relatively simple, clearly defined, limited, and has measurable tasks to determine productivity and efficiency. In the organizations which have bureaucratic culture, there is a rational and legal structure and detailed definitions are used to control the organization (Phesey, 1993).

*Success culture* expresses organizations which support members who work successfully. In the organizations in which this culture is prevalent, the realization of purposes and completing tasks are more important than rules. Individual responsibility is important. In this culture, it is accepted that people naturally work at a workplace that they themselves enjoy (Harrison, 1972 as cited in Phesey, 1993).

*Support culture* refers to a type of organization in which there are commitment and mutual relations among members. In this culture, it is essential to maintain reliability, support, high expectations for success, honesty, and open communication among members. The organizations managed under support culture provide such values as partnerships, friendship, and belonging. These values increase employees' commitment to the organization (Harrison, 1972 as cited in Pheyse, 1993).

*Power culture* is based on leading power, justice, and goodness. Leaders expect subordinates to obey them and the rules which are in place. In these organizations, the cause for obeying rules is based on fear (Harrison, 1972 as cited in Pheyse, 1993).

### **Power and Organizational Culture in Faculties of Education**

Educational institutions are quite different from other institutions in terms of their structures, objectives, employees, functioning, outcomes, and interaction with their environment and community. Colleges of education as educational institutions have unique organizational structures and behavioral patterns. Autonomy, originality, and decision-making processes make both the organizational culture and the overall climate of such institutions different (Gizir, 2007).

Analyzing the organizational differences, Etzioni (1961) found that educational institutions and universities have a normative organizational structure (as cited in Corwin, 1974). Composed of independent decision-making sub-units, colleges of education, require the use of power (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1974) and administrators' power stems from their level of authority and individual characteristics. More specifically, heads' power comes from the size of the department, their effectiveness in the college, and their academic performances (Goyer, 1985).

Deans' power sources are the budget to which they have access, their staff (Bitzer, 1985), laws, authority, rewarding, managing curriculum, and personal as well as external sources (Ranta, 1985). Traditionally, deans were considered middle line managers (Zacharias, 1985). For a long time, the main responsibility of the dean was to prepare, implement, and evaluate the organizational plans (Geddes, 1985) as well as serve students and shape the future of the institution (Bitzer, 1985). However, through his investigations

of both deans' and department heads' administrative competences, Inman (2009) found that many of these administrators had not received any leadership or management training. In fact, they gained their skills on their own through their own personal experiences. Department heads are the closest to deans in terms of feeling their power and one of their responsibilities is to protect academic freedom (Qualtar & Willis, 2012). Having strong communications between deans and department heads reduces institutional and organizational problems while also contributing to the development of relations (Whitmore, 1985). In this study, among the many models of power sources for educational administrators, both French and Raven's classification (2001) and Pheyse's (1993) organizational culture models have been used.

### **Purpose**

The primary objective of this study is to determine the relationship between power sources and administrators' (deans, vice deans, heads of departments) power usage styles at colleges of education and their organizational cultures. In order to achieve this aim, answers to the following questions were researched:

1. What are faculty members' opinions regarding administrators' legal power usages?
2. What are faculty members' opinions regarding administrators' coercive power usages?
3. What are faculty members' opinions regarding administrators' power usages in the delivery of resources?
4. What are faculty members' opinions regarding administrators' charismatic power usages?
5. What are faculty members' opinions regarding administrators' expertise power usages?
6. What are faculty members' opinions regarding administrators' power usages in creating supportive organizational culture?
7. What are faculty members' opinions regarding power usages in monitoring the implementation of the rules and standards established by laws?
8. What are faculty members' opinions regarding the encouragement of individual responsibility and giving importance to doing tasks rather than obeying rules in their organization?
9. How do administrators control the timing of carrying out the tasks assigned to subordinates in organizations?

## Method

### Research Design

This study employed a phenomenologic method. The phenomenology researches, which are qualitative in style, aim to gather more detailed data. The main instrument used in this method is interviewing.

### Study Group

In this study, in order to gather data, the purposeful sample (maximum variety) technique was used. This type of sampling aims for participants to be represented equally at the maximum level in line with the purpose of the study. This study was conducted during the 2011-2012 academic year with the working group being comprised of 20 instructors from different colleges of education (Adiyaman University-6, Muş Alpaslan University-4, Çoruh University-1, İnönü University-2, İstanbul University-1, Marmara University-3 and Yıldız Technical University -3).

### Data Collection

Research data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Three instructors were consulted while developing the interview forms. The researchers composed a total of nine questions; three of which were about the power of status, two about personal power, and the remaining four pertained to organization culture. Answers were both recorded and written down by the researchers.

### Analysis of the Data

In phenomenology research projects, the analysis of data is intended to determine meanings. As such, for the present study, data were analyzed using a descriptive analysis technique with instructors' opinions being evaluated accordingly. After which, the research data's reliability was reviewed by different researchers (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In the descriptive analysis, similarities and differences pertaining to "reliability" were performed by two of researchers using the formula of agreement + disagreement x 100 (Miles & Huberman, 1994). At the end of these two analyses, agreement was determined to be 87%.

## Results

### Findings about Using Power

Findings about how, according to instructors' views, education faculty administrators use different power styles, such as legal, coercive, reward, charismatic, and expertise styles are detailed below:

Of the total instructors (N=20), 35% stated that faculty administrators require signatures from research assistants, 30% remarked that they have been tracked, and 30% remarked that the use of legal power may change depending just as much on the administrator him/herself as on the person with whom a particular administrator is dealing.

One of the instructors stated: "*Establishing and implementing such a rule of requiring a signature paper to be signed during office hours by an official is demeaning.*" (6A).

One of the instructors remarked: "*I received an illness report from the hospital, but because I was so ill, I did not have enough time to fill out a paper [that the university requires] which helps to use the report as permission for sick leave. The dean of the faculty opened an investigation about me which resulted in my being discharged from the head of the department.*" (3Y).

Of the instructors, 65% remarked that coercive power manifested itself as scolding, while 40% stated that it manifested itself as tracking others secretly, 15% said that it meant to threaten a professional regarding his/her job, and 20% stated that coercive power meant to give unwanted assignments. On the other hand, 20% of the instructors stated that they have not faced any pressure from the administration. Yet, 60% of the instructors reported that administrators used their coercive power on research assistants, 25% reported that administrators used coercive power against those who hold different opinions than those of the administration, and 20% reported that administrators used coercive power on those with political opinions different from their own.

One of the instructors stated: "*While the class was in progress, I felt that there was somebody in front of the door, and when I opened the door, I saw that the dean was there. The dean was observing the class and because of that incident, I now leave the door open while teaching my classes.*" (3Y).

Another instructor explained: "*The vice-dean put one person's name on three doors so that he could provide his friends the opportunity to have their own rooms. The aim of this was to show others*

*that the rooms were crowded in order to hide their friends who didn't share rooms."* (10A).

Of the instructors, 40% remarked that they were impressed with the rapid decision-making ability of administrators, 35% were impressed with administrators' being accessible, and 30% were impressed with the attention that administrators gave to students, 30% were impressed by administrators' problem solving skills, and 30% remarked that they did not take any characteristics of their administrators as models.

One of the instructors stated: *"I do not want to take any characteristics of faculty members as a role model. The characteristics of people whose traits I take as a role model are to be fair, to be open to communication, to use power and authority at the appropriate time and place, and to treat everyone sensitively based on social justice and equality."* (10A).

Of the instructors, 80% stated that faculty administrators did not have any ability to manage the faculty, 55% remarked that administrators did not motivate employees, 35% stated that the administration had communication problems, and 45% remarked that administrators were the reasons for departmental chaos.

Speaking about the issue, one of the instructors stated: *"A situation in which faculty members' exercise of basic authority in an appropriate manner, as opposed to using other means of power, is still a one yet to be realized."* (5Y).

Another instructor stated: *"Faculties do not have any vision for the future, they always take defensive attitudes in communication, instead of listening to us. For, whatever we say, they just grumble and respond in a reactionary way."* (17P).

### Findings about Organization Culture

This part of the study deals with how using power affects the formation of an environment of support within the institution, which powers are used in bureaucracy, the institution's success, and its culture.

Of the instructors, 75% stated that administrators did not provide any professional support, and 75% were of the opinion that administrators did not create any environment conducive for social sharing. On the other hand, however, 40% of the instructors interviewed stated that there is a group with whom administrators have closer ties.

One of the instructors expressed the following about the lack of supporting culture in his faculty: *"The negative behaviors in the faculty decrease my respect for the job, decrease my motivation and trust, and also decrease my institutional commitment. In such an environment of threats, my respect decreases for my job and profession."* (10A).

Regarding communication issues, one of the female instructors stated: *"Whenever we run into each other, I always greet my dean, but he never responds in turn."* (8A).

Although 55% of the instructors pointed out that administrators attempted to form their own principles, rules, and standards in addition to legal regulations, 50% indicated that the routine meetings in the department and faculty were not conducted properly, and 45% remarked that employee participation in the decision-making process was limited to unsatisfactory levels.

One of the research assistants revealed his insights about the decision regarding the Pedagogic Formation Courses offered to public as evening classes with the following words: *"After the enrolment of students to evening education programs in the faculty had ended, student enrolment fees for such programs were reduced. The dean suggested to the faculty committee that "School Experiences and Teaching Practice" could be implemented by a research assistant. However this puts a huge burden on the shoulders of the research assistant since it is not possible for a research assistant to conduct applied courses of 120 students. The main aim here is to increase evening course payments."* (4Y).

Of the instructors, 55% stated that they performed the requirements of their responsibilities solely through their own individual efforts, 50% expressed that they received financial support for their articles, projects, and conferences, and 35% stated that their academic works were hindered.

The head of the department mentioned about his dean having prevented him/her: *"I feel that I will be hindered in whatever academic activity I take part in. I wanted to go to an exhibition, but I was not allowed. I wanted to start a course for high school students who were going to join a talent competition, but this was also rejected."* (3Y).

Of the instructors, 90% stated that administrators tracked if the task they had assigned was being worked on, 65% indicated that administrators allocated specific times for the completion of a task, and 60% stated that administrators provided the necessary opportunities to complete tasks assigned to them.

One of the instructors expressed the following about assigned tasks being tracked by administrators: *"The head of the department wants the tasks that he assigns to be completed before our own contractual duties. Until we submit the task he has given us, he always calls and asks about the progress, inquiring as to which part I need help with and if there is any need, that he would provide me help."* (9A).

### Conclusion and Discussion

A study investigating the use of power by administrators in schools of education, such institutions' organizational culture(s), and the relation between the two has been conducted.

### Conclusions Regarding How Administrators of Education Faculty Use Power

After analyzing the research data, it was found that faculty administrators used their legal power to require signatures during office hours and to track instructors. Özaslan and Gürsel (2008) said that while department heads in the faculty of science and arts used mainly their charismatic power, department heads in the faculty of education used legal powers.

Instructors pointed out that administrators' use of coercive powers came in the form of oral warnings or scolding, tracking instructors, forcing instructors to perform tasks that do not fall under their contractual responsibilities and threat of dismissal from a position. The opinion that administrators provided fewer opportunities to those instructors whom they see as opponents was also found to be held by instructors. Instructors facing such problems consider changing institutions. It was found that administrators mostly used coercive power on research assistants. Koşar and Çalık (2011) focused on the fact that in educational institutions, the use of coercive power prevents teachers from being innovation and creative.

The instructors pointed out that during promotion less consideration was given to the principles of equality and justice, while also stating that effective leaders use their powers of expertise, knowledge, and support the most, and the power of punishment/coercive the least (Bal, Campbell, Steed, & Meddings, 2008). There is a relationship between administrator's charismatic powers and rewarding powers (Koşar & Çalık, 2011). Titrek and Zafer (2009) pointed out that private preschool

administrators used more charismatic power and rewards than primary school administrators in public schools.

It has been made manifest that faculty administrators do not use their charismatic powers, as indicated by one fourth of the participants stating that their own administrators possessed no characteristics worthy of being taken as an example. Hoy and Miskel (2010) remarked that instructors working in successful institutions are more altruistic due to the respect and loyalty they hold toward their administrators.

Administrators' power has been accepted as the power of administration as a whole. The following results have been attained: instructors perceive that faculty administrators do not have sufficient communication skills, that they cannot successfully motivate their subordinates, and that they are sometimes seen as the source the chaos present in their institutions. On the contrary, primary school administrators mostly use professional powers (Aslanargun, 2011). If we were to compare schools of science and arts with schools of education, we would find more negative opinions toward schools of education (Özaslan & Gürsel, 2008). Department heads in schools of education use legal power most frequently (Özdemir, 2006). Administrators in public schools, however, use legal powers first while administrators in private institutions generally make use of professional power first (Bakan & Büyükmeşe, 2010).

### Results of Researches on Organization Culture of Education Faculties

It has been found that administrators of schools of education do not exert much effort in developing a culture of mutual support. Moreover, social funds at such faculties have not been sufficiently developed although by such funds that higher cooperation between individuals is nurtured (Cohen & Prusak, 2001).

In the study, faculty administrators were also found to be creating a culture of bureaucracy within the institution, which hinders them unable to perform their contracted departmental duties. In line with this finding, Erdem, Adıgüzel, and Kaya (2010) found in their research that the most dominant culture in the institution they work is the culture of hierarchy.

Findings also indicated that administrations did not exert any effort or have any concern as to

nurturing a culture of success within the faculty. On the contrary, instructors were found to be provided with limited financial support and incentives to participate in projects, conferences, and in the publishing of academic articles.

It has been observed that administrators most often establish a culture of power in order to realize the wider aims of the institution in which administrators check as to whether non-contractual, assigned tasks are completed in time, providing required help accordingly.

### **The Relationship between Power Use and the Organization Culture Established by Faculty Administrators**

The findings have indicated that education faculty administrators mostly use legal, coercive, and reward powers which lead to cultures of bureaucracy and power becoming dominant within schools of education. Koşar and Çalık (2011) pointed that administrators' use of legal, coercive, and charismatic powers, however, pave the way for the formation of cultures of bureaucratic success and power. Handy (1995), on the other hand, has pointed out that using professional power nurtures a culture of power while Benda (2000) pointed out that administrators' use of rewards and charismatic powers work to establish a culture of mutual support within the institution. Koşar (2008) and Sezgin (2010) found in their study of primary school teachers that bureaucratic culture was used the least.

Hoy and Miskel (2010) asserted that the way that administrators affect instructors in a charismatic way could influence the faculty and the instructors.

In this study, administrators' leadership traits and styles were not examined. Further studies could focus on administrators' leadership styles and how instructors' experiences are affected as well as the ways in which power balance is maintained. It was found in the study that administrators also do not attend in-service trainings. As it was asserted by Hacifazlıoğlu (2010), "leadership training and development" should be on the agenda of higher education institutions in order to support academic administrators and leaders on an ongoing basis.

In order to increase the success of an organization, faculty administrators should pay attention to the institution's culture and social capital. These important points will help to improve employees' perceptions of the organization environment, their institutional commitment, and overall job satisfaction. Studies analyzing the source of power that administrators use found that leadership types and organization culture leads to increased job satisfaction and commitment to one's institution (Lok & Crawford, 2004; Mcrae 2011; Morgan, 2006). In order to cultivate the positive effects of faculty administrators' power management, following recommendations have been provided:

- Individuals from other fields assigned as administrators should attend in-service training programs.
- All rules and regulations should be applied effectively in education faculties.
- There should be an "ethics committee" in faculties in which instructors of varying status, as well as student representatives, should actively participate.
- A culture of transparency and accountability should be nurtured within faculties of Education.

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