School Administrators' and Teachers' Opinions about Influencing Each Other

Saadet Kuru Cetin*
Mugla Sitki Kocman University, TURKEY

Sakir Cinkir
Ankara University, TURKEY

Abstract: In this study, it were aimed to determine how the secondary school administrators and teachers influence each other. The data was collected from 18 school administrators and 20 teachers. The sample of the study consisted of secondary school administrators and teachers working at Ankara, Kiriklale, Kirsehir, Konya, Mugla, Izmir, Mus, Bursa, Izmit, Istanbul city centers, Turkey. The data in the study were collected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interview forms including six questions were developed for based on the sub-objectives Kipnis ve Schmidt's classification, which are set as a) friendliness, b) reason, c) bargain, d) coalitions, e) assertiveness, f) higher authority and g) sanction. According to the results of the study, while teachers use friendliness, reasoning and bargaining tactics to influence their managers. They use coalitions tactics at least. On the other hand, while school administrators use friendliness, bargaining and coalition tactics and they use assertiveness tactic at least.

Keywords: *influence tactics, school administrators, teachers*

Introduction

From the moment they are born, people find themselves in a social environment. This social environment influence their behavior, taste, manner of communication, persuasion and affection. People's continuing their existence in this social environment largely depends on their communication skills. This importance of communication for individuals applies to institutions as well (Tasci and Eroglu, 2007, p.534). We can say that organizational communication is the most important intraorganizational dynamic required by institutions to maintain their existence. Therefore, each and every change made by institutions in order to improve and renew themselves is easily affected by organizational communication. Organizational communication is a process which links organizational systems and allows for harmony between these systems. Problems arising from organizational communication may affect all systems within the organization. We can mention four functions of organizational communication providing information, influencing, educating/teaching and giving orders (Tasci and Eroglu, 2007, p.534). All these functions within the organization are required to be performed by managers. Influencing is the heart of the management process (Friedrich, 2010, p.1). Managers use the influencing process to control employees (Onyekwere, 1989, p.18), to utilize scarce resources

(Cocivera, 2002, p.1), for organizational change (Boonstra and Bennebroek-Gravenhorst, 1989) to break employees' resistance against change (Dulaimi, Nepal and Park, 2005) and to enhance performance of employees from different backgrounds (Yamaguchi, 2009).

While researchers keep improving their understanding about functions of organizations (Bursalioglu, 2002, , p. 60), the subject of political influence has become increasingly importance in the scientific and popular literature (DuBring, 1989; Vigodo and Cohen, 2002). One of the most important indicators of effective management in organizations is that managers are able to influence their colleagues, their superiors and their employees (Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson, 1980; Yamaguchi, 2009, p.22; Yukl and Falbe, 1990, p.132; Yukl, 2010, p.198). Because influencing is a goal-oriented behavior and individuals use influencing tactics in order to achieve outcomes which they desire (Staphanie, Castro, Ceaser, Wayne, Gerald, Ferris and Fried 2003, p.1).

In order to be an manager successful in influencing, managers need to have their requests fulfilled, their suggestions supported and their decisions implemented. To this end, they need to influence employees (Yamaguchi, 2009; Yukl, 2010, 1998; Bennebroek and Boonstra,1998). Essentially, influencing is a valid action at all levels of

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* **Corresponding author:**
Saadet Kuru Cetin, Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Faculty of Education, Mugla, Turkey
Email: saaddet@gmail.com

organizational communication. Influencing is a bilateral action. Organizational influencing is not only used by managers. Within the organization, employees influence their colleagues and their superiors as well. Especially for a new employee who just recently joined the organization, upward influencing is an important and difficult task. Studies show that employees who are successful in upward influencing are supported by their superiors (Tasci and Eroglu, 2007, p.534). Downward influencing attempts of managers are usually on employees' behaviors and feelings (Metin, 2014; Duyar, Aydin and Pehlivan, 2009)

The reason why influencing tactics are researched is not limited to the above mentioned data. According to Yukl (2010, 21-22), the reasons why influencing tactics are researched include (1) collecting information about how managers motivate employees for extra effort, (2) collecting information about how decision-making process occurs in organizations, (3) checking whether policies and strategies are successfully implemented in the organization and (4) revealing how managers get the support of upper management. Thus, influencing studies have an important place within educational organizations as well.

The first systematic approach related to measurement of influencing tactics (Yukl, 2010, p.217) was undertaken by Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980). In the study where they revealed the pattern of managers' influencing tactics; Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith and Wilkinson (1984, p.59) suggest that managerial influencing does not arise from previously suggested empirical approach, but from the social power theory. According to Kipnis et al. (1984, p.59), theoretical power-based organizational influencing tactics suggested by French and Raven (1959) do not reflect all influencing tactics used by managers. Kipnis et al. (1984, p.59) suggest that this is because the classification is not produced theoretically and empirically. Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980) performed their first study with 165 managers. Following this study, Kipnis and Schmidt (1982, 1984, 1999) classified organizational influencing tactics in seven sub-dimensions: friendliness, bargain, sanctions, assertiveness, higher authority, coalition and reason. Definitions of Kipnis and Schmidt (1988; 1999) for these sub-dimensions are as follows. (1) Friendliness: Use of impression management, flattery and the creation of goodwill. (2) Bargain: Exchange of benefits or favors. (3) Sanctions: Using organizationally sanctioned rewards and punishments. (4) Assertiveness: Use of a direct and forceful approach. (5) Higher Authority: Gaining support of higher levels in the organization to back up requests. (6) Coalition: Mobilization of other people in the organization. (7) Reason: Use of facts and data to support the development of a logical argument. Basaran (2000, p.251) suggests that differences between influencing tactics seen in Figure 1 arise from influence sources of subordinates and superiors.

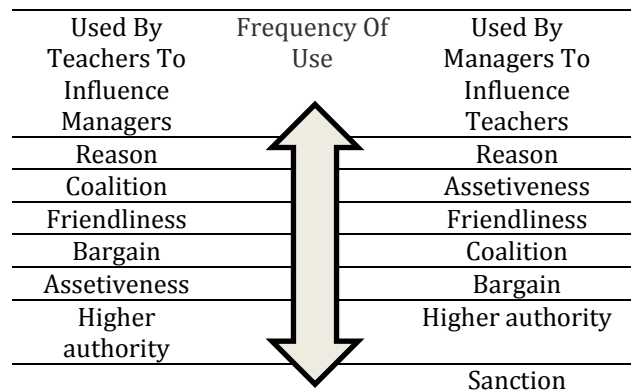| Used By Teachers To Influence Managers	Frequency Of Use	Used By Managers To Influence Teachers
Reason		Reason
Coalition		Assetiveness
Friendliness		Friendliness
Bargain		Coalition
Assetiveness		Bargain
Higher authority		Higher authority
		Sanction

Figure 1. Superior-Subordinate Interaction

Source: Kipnis, D., Schmidt, S., Swaffin-Smith, C., & Wilkinson, I. (1984, Winter). Patterns of Managerial Influence: Shotgun Managers, Tacticians, and Bystanders. *Organizational Dynamics*, p. 60.

Whilst many different classifications are available in the literature (Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson, 1980; Schrieshein and Hinkin, 1990; Yukl and Falbe, 1990), it is understood from descriptions of organizational influencing tactics made by the researchers that these studies (Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson, 1980; Culver, 1994; Yukl and Falbe, 1990; Fu, 1998; Su, 2010) are actually very similar to each other. Our study is based on the classification made by Kipnis and Schmidt (1999).

Most of the studies conducted especially in Turkey are studies performed with managers about what influencing tactics are used (Dagli and Calik, 2016; Aydin and Pehlivan, 2010; Duyar, Aydin and Pehlivan, 2009). However, to the best of our knowledge, there is only a few studies conducted to research organizational influencing tactics used by employees (Cetin, 2014). One of the most critical questions to be answered by this study is how employees in the educational environment influence their managers.

The study aims to determine the relationship of influencing tactics used by managers and teachers in Turkish secondary schools with organizational justice. For this purpose, answers for the following questions are sought:

1. What influencing tactics are used by managers to influence teachers?
2. What influencing tactics are used by teachers to influence managers?

Method

Research Pattern

As per the nature of the study, it uses the phenomenology pattern, which is a qualitative research pattern. This pattern aims to reveal and interpret individual perceptions and opinions regarding a certain phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Yildirim and Simsek, 2008).

The interview method was used for data collection. "What influencing tactics are used by school managers and teachers to influence each other" was examined by reaching sub-units of interviews. The interview method is regarded as a useful method in phenomenology studies in terms of collecting complete and accurate data (Judd, Smith and Kidder, 1991).

Population and Sample

The research data were collected by holding interviews with 18 managers and 20 teachers working at public secondary schools in provinces of Ankara, Kirikkale, Kirsehir, Konya, Mugla, Izmir, Mus, Bursa, Izmit and Istanbul. The maximum diversity sampling, a purposive sampling method, was used to create the study group. The purposive sampling (Yildirim and Simsek, 2005; Aziz, 2008) was used to select individuals who are most suitable for the purposes of the study. Also, it was aimed to create a relatively small sample. In this sampling method, researchers try to find whether there are common or shared phenomenon or differences between various situations and aim to reveal different dimensions of the problem depending on diversity (Yildirim and Simsek, 2005).

Information about various variables related to managers and teachers in the study group can be found in Table 1. As seen in Table 1, we were able to interview only one manager from provinces of Ankara, Kirsehir, Konya, Bursa and Mus. We interviewed two managers from provinces of Kirikkale and izmit and three managers from provinces of Mugla, Izmir and Istanbul. When it comes to teachers, we were able to interview one teacher from provinces of Ankara, Mus and Istanbul, two teachers from provinces of Kirikkale, Mugla, Izmir, Izmit and Bursa, three teachers from the province of Konya and four teachers from the province of Kirsehir. Three managers were female and five managers were male. Although we tried to have an equal number of female and male managers in the study, we were not able to balance the number of female and male managers due to the structure of the manager group (Can, 2010). The number of both female and male teachers was ten. The age of managers varied between 46 and 56. Six of the managers were in the 46-50 age group, two were in the 51-55 age group and ten were in the 50 and above age group. The higher number of managers in the 56 and above age group was expected since promotion to a managerial position requires experience. There were ten teachers in the 35-40 age group, four teachers in the 41-45 age group, four teachers in the 46-50 age group and two teachers in the 51-55 age group.

Table 1. Personal Information about Teachers and Managers According to Qualitative Data

Variable		f	
		Managers	Teachers
City centers	Ankara	1	1
	Kirikkale	2	2
	Kirsehir	1	4
	Konya	1	3
	Mugla	3	2
	Izmir	3	2
	Mus	1	1
	Izmit	2	2
	Bursa	1	2
	Istanbul	3	1
Gender	Female	3	10
	Male	15	10
Age	35-40	-	10
	41-45	-	4
	46-50	6	4
	51-55	2	2
	56 +	10	-
Working years in school	3	-	7
	4	2	5
	5	6	2
	6+	10	6

As can be seen in Table 1, the working period of managers in their current school varied between 4 and 6 years. Two of the managers worked at their current school for 4 years, six for 5 years and ten for 6 years or more. Seven teachers worked at their current school for 3 years, two for 5 years, six for 6 years or more.

Data Collection Tool

A semi-structured interview form was developed to collect research data. Sample cases and questions used in the interview were structured based on the influencing tactics classification made by Kipnis and Schmidt (1999). Using the interview form, managers were asked what influencing tactics they used to influence teachers, whereas teachers were asked what influencing tactics they used to influence managers via sample cases. Sample cases were determined by interviewing three teachers and three managers and then submitted for expert opinion. Following final adjustments, the data collection form was given its final shape by conducting preliminary interviews with one teacher and one manager.

Various strategies were developed to ensure validity and reliability of the data obtained in the study. In the triangulation strategy developed in order to ensure internal validity of the study; multiple sources, different individuals and different opinion are researched to reveal different dimensions of a fact. Instead of drawing a general conclusion, the triangulation strategy aims to reveal all aspects of a fact by highlighting different opinions. The colleague test, another strategy used to ensure internal validity, refers to opinions of colleagues in relation to results of

the study (Merriam, 1998, 204). These strategies allow the researcher to assess the accuracy of findings and results obtained. In this context, we applied the triangulation strategy and the colleague test to ensure the internal validity of the study. Within the scope of the triangulation strategy, we tried to focus on different opinions of managers and teachers as much as possible and reveal them with every aspect available.

Detailed description and purposive sampling methods were used to ensure external validity of the study. Detailed description can be defined as organizing the raw data according to themes and concepts and presenting the data to the reader without adding comments and by remaining loyal to the nature of the data (Yildirim and Simsek, 2008, p.270).

Findings and Discussion

Findings and Comments Related to Organizational Influencing Tactics of Teachers

The data obtained from interviews with teachers provide information about what organizational influencing tactics are preferred by teachers to influence managers. Three sample cases were created in order to reveal tactics used by teachers to influence managers and these sample cases were used to analyze teachers' behaviors. Accordingly, answers given by teachers were analyzed according to sub-dimension of organizational influencing tactics set out in the Profiles of Organizational Influence Strategies (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1999). The classification of organizational influencing tactics used by teachers to influence managers can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Organizational Influencing Tactics Used by Teachers to Influence Managers

Organizational Influencing Tactics Used by Teachers	f	%
Friendliness	30	37,97
Reason	28	35,44
Bargain	10	12,65
Assetiveness	8	10,12
Higher authority	0	0
Coalition	3	3,79

As seen in the chart, teachers were found to use friendliness, reason, bargain and coalition tactics to influence managers. It was concluded from answers given by teachers that they never used the higher authority tactic to influence managers. The higher authority tactic is defined as 'gaining support of higher levels in the organization to back up requests' (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988; 1999). The reason why teachers do not resort to this tactic might be that they do not wish to skip the next hierarchical step in front of them, i.e. their managers.

Some of the answers given by teachers during interviews are as follows:

T15: ....I would go to another manager who is able to understand me or I would ask another teacher, who is able to understand and explain my situation, to step in. I would engage in a dialog with managers in this way.

T2: I would take opinions from other teachers to change my manager's mind.

T7: I would explain that I do my job properly and make a lot of effort for my class and I would tell the manager that I expect children this as their grade. I would ask the results of the university exam from the manager.

T11: I would directly ask for a program change for healthy teaching. I would list my requests. If the manager fulfilled requests from other teachers in the past -this is about justice- I would demand my requests are fulfilled as well.

In a study conducted by Tyrovola, Papanikolaou and Adamis (2012) in Greece, the most commonly used organizational influencing tactics were found to be personal appeal, ingratiation and consultation, whereas the least common organizational influencing tactics were exchange, coalition and pressure. It seems that these results are highly consistent with results of Bennebroek and Boonstra's (1998) study and Cetin's (2014) study. Although both of these studies use a different organizational influencing tactics scale, the results show parallelisms. In the study conducted by Schermerhorn and Bond (1991), on the other hand, rational persuasion and coalition were found to be the most common influencing tactics.

Findings and Comments Related to Organizational Influencing Tactics of Managers

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Table 3. Organizational Influencing Tactics Used by Managers to Influence Teachers

Organizational Influencing Tactics Used by Managers	f	%
Friendliness	20	34,48
Reason	18	31,03
Bargain	8	13,79
Assetiveness	12	20,68
Higher authority	0	0
Coalition	0	0
Sanction	0	0

As seen in the chart, managers mostly used friendliness, reason and assertiveness tactics to

influence teachers. According to these results, managers reported that they never used higher authority, coalition and sanctions tactics. According to Kipnis and Schmidt, sanctions and higher authority tactics are hard tactics originating from manager's position. Managers who use hard tactics generally use their authority and power position and these individual demonstrate non-personal and manipulative behaviors when applying tactics. The reason why managers do not want to use these tactics might be their reluctance to use tactics originating from hierarchy or position.

Some of the answers given by managers during interviews are as follows:

> M8: ....If a teacher comes to me complaining about the schedule, I kindly explain why we have to do this. I explain all teachers why they are valuable to me. However, if I know that the teacher is really in a difficult situation, I try to do my best to help.

> M9: If there is a problem with grades given by teachers, I meet with teachers and ask them to review their grades.

> M20: ....I have been preparing schedules for 21 years, I have not encountered such a situation. What we do for a certain teacher, we do for other teachers as well. If such a situation occurred, I would call for the teacher in question and I would explain that this situation should be discussed directly with the management, not with others. It is not right to fulfill wishes of a teacher and neglecting wishes of others. I would explain that this is what we have to do and the situation is as is due to obligations.

In addition, it was found that managers were usually sensitive about requests of teachers, however behaved in an assertive manner when impossible requests were made. These results are consistent with other results and results of the studies mentioned below.

The results of our study show similarities with studies conducted by Dagli and Calik, (2016), Cetin (2014), Gozu (2012), Aydin and Pehlivan (2010), Duyar, Aydin and Pehlivan (2009), Gregg (2003), Peter (1998), Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith and Wilkinson (1984). According to the study conducted by Aydin and Pehlivan (2010) with managers of private public schools, the most common tactics used by school managers were friendliness, coalition and bargain. It was found in the study conducted by Duyar, Aydin and Pehlivan (2009) that school managers in Turkey mostly used official pressure tactics, whereas exchange, sanctions and higher authority were rarely used as organization influencing tactics in the United States and Turkey. In the study conducted by Gozu (2012) with Turkish and American managers, it was found that Turkish managers used presenting legal basis, exchange, personal appeal, coalition and pressure tactics more frequently compared to American managers. It was observed in the study conducted by Peter (1998) with student service experts in University of Utah that the most common

tactics used by student service experts were friendliness and coalition. It was also revealed that the most common tactics perceived by student service experts were friendliness, coalition and reason. Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith and Wilkinson (1984) noted in their study that managers used reason and assertiveness tactics to influence their subordinates.

Conclusion and Implications

In this study, we attempted to understand what organizational influencing tactics are used by teachers and managers. This section of the study includes conclusions drawn based on the findings of the study and implications of these results.

Conclusions drawn based on the findings of the study are as follows: The most common organizational influencing tactics used by teachers to influence managers were friendliness, bargain and assertiveness, whereas higher authority and coalition tactics were moderately used. The least commonly used organizational influencing tactic was reason.

According to results related to organizational influencing tactics used by managers, managers used friendliness, bargain, coalition and assertiveness on a high level, whereas they used higher authority and sanctions tactics on a moderate level and the reason tactic on a low level.

The implications developed based on results of the study are given below:

> * Teachers need to use the reason tactic, which they currently use on a low level, more frequently in order to have managers accept their behavior which they are required to demonstrate when realizing the purposes of the organization. As an organizational influencing tactic, reason might have positive effects on the communication between the manager and the teacher. For this reason, it is important for teachers to understand the importance of this concept that they are given theoretical and practical information related to organizational influencing tactics.

> * The way a manager influences teachers to ensure that they perform their tasks reflects the management style of said manager and therefore the organizational culture and atmosphere. In order to ensure that teachers adopt, share and implement common goals and values of the school, managers should use hard organizational influencing tactics less frequently and resort to soft organizational influencing tactics such as reason to ensure that teachers accept their behavior.

> * It is recommended that studies are performed to investigate relations of organizational influencing tactics with different organizational behaviors such as leadership, organizational engagement, organizational commitment, organizational culture and motivation.

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