THE PRESSURE GROUPS ENCOUNTERED AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, TEKİRDAĞ SAMPLE

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Abstract: Primary schools are institutions that both affect and are affected by the social environment they operate in. Our children, the students in these schools are constantly under the pressure of consumerism. There are many pressure groups both inside and outside the schools. The impacts of these pressure groups; namely private retail sector, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), school family unions and financial institutions etc.; on our school system and our children have not been studied deeply so far.

This study has been conducted in the 2013/2014 school year in Tekirdag Central District primary schools. The aim of the study was to identify the impacts of these pressure groups and their strategies. In order to reach this aim; we first have performed a literature review and then created a list of pressure groups and their activities. Secondly we have conducted interviews with the principals of the primary schools in the area and applied the survey which will be detailed in the study.

There is also an analysis section to evaluate the obtained set of data. The results obtained from the study, can be summarized as follows:

Schools have always been seen as commercial clients by retailer companies, financial institutions, school family unions and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) despite the fact that these organizations have aided schools in organizing campaigns like school health checks, conferences, building repairs etc. they always prioritize their own agenda.

For this reason their so called "help for the education" has always been distorting the real educational targets and they have always tended to use school system for their own advantages.

This is an inevitable conflict between schools and organizations for profit. Insufficient governmental funds is another factor which forces our schools to collaborate with pressure groups getting help in organizing building repairs, getting financial help, health checks and conferences etc.

Key Words: Environment, Pressure Groups, Primary Schools, education, students

Introduction:

The schools that operate according to an open system conception are affected by their events in their environment and it also affects its environment. This interaction is mutual and on-going. Technological innovations in the field of communication Technologies can accelerate this interaction. If the school is in a central and developed environment the effect is in a different way and if it is in a suburb area the effect is different.

It is known that the pressure groups have various methods of influencing and that we live intimately with them. Persuasion, advertisements, affecting the public opinion, threat and bribery are some of these methods that we encounter. We can categorize these methods into two groups as the intrascholastic and extrascholastic pressure groups.

The political parties, private companies, social groups, municipalities, associations, and etc. in the environment of the school form the extrascholastic pressure groups. Peer groups and school staff can be considered as the intrascholastic pressure groups. The schools that are liable to pressure both on its education and management systems have to find strategies to cope with this pressure. Sometimes the parents may want to force the school administration to do something and sometimes the schools may be forced to direct themselves to some companies in their environment because of financial problems. The contacts are held by the school administration. In this respect the school administrators have to develop appropriate strategies for the interaction method.

In order to reach their desired educational policies of the schools scientific analyses should be done on whether the pressure groups have a positive or negative effect and how they can be used in favor of the school and education.

This study aims to determine the pressure groups in the environment of the schools and the strategies developed by the administrators against the pressure groups. The aim of the study is to find out the pressure groups in the schools environment and is based on the ideas of the school administrators and teachers about the pressure groups. The school operates as a socially open system understanding. That is to say; the school takes some input from the society and gives this input as output to the society back. This mechanism is one of the basic targets of the school as a formal education institution and is the basic determiner of the systematic operation of the school.
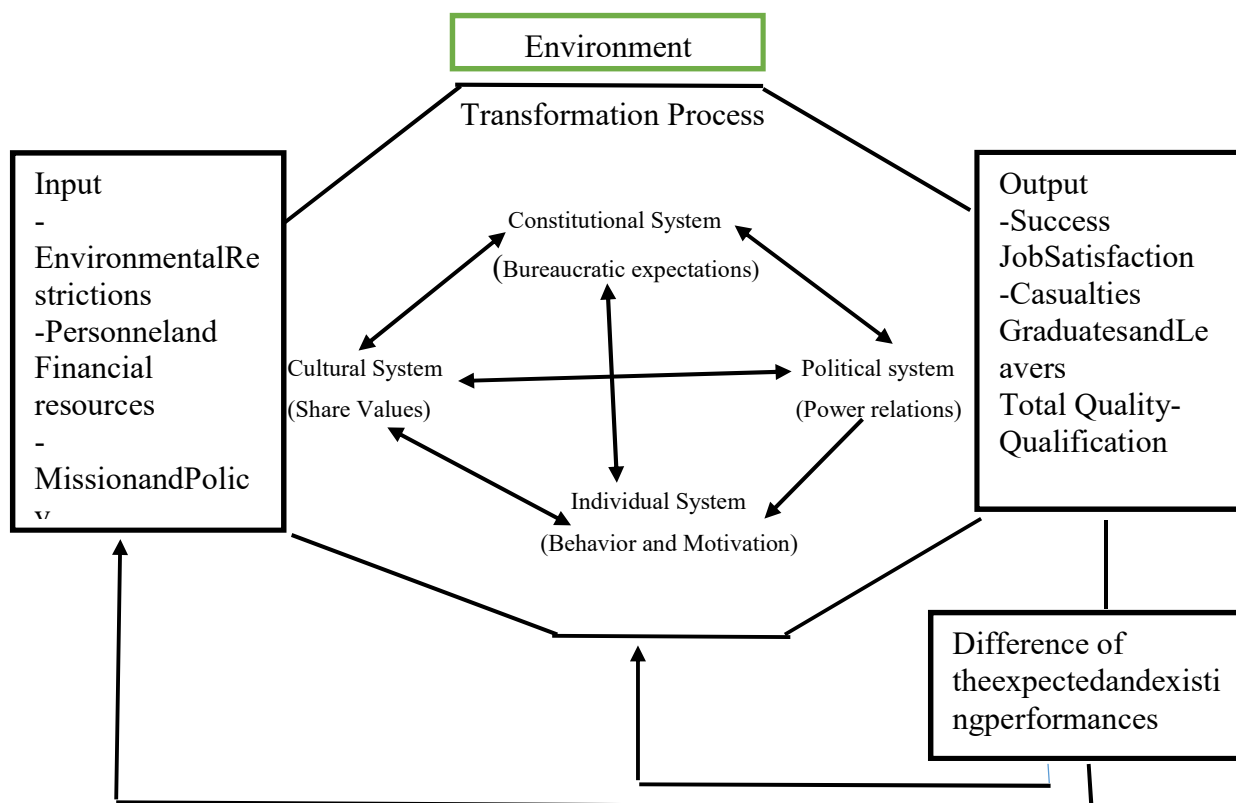
Figure:1. As social system model for the school; Hoy and Miskel, 2001

There are many variables that effect the school and environment relations. These variables are; higher rank administrators, school administrators, teachers, families, peer groups, pressure groups and others. (Yiğit and Bayraktar)
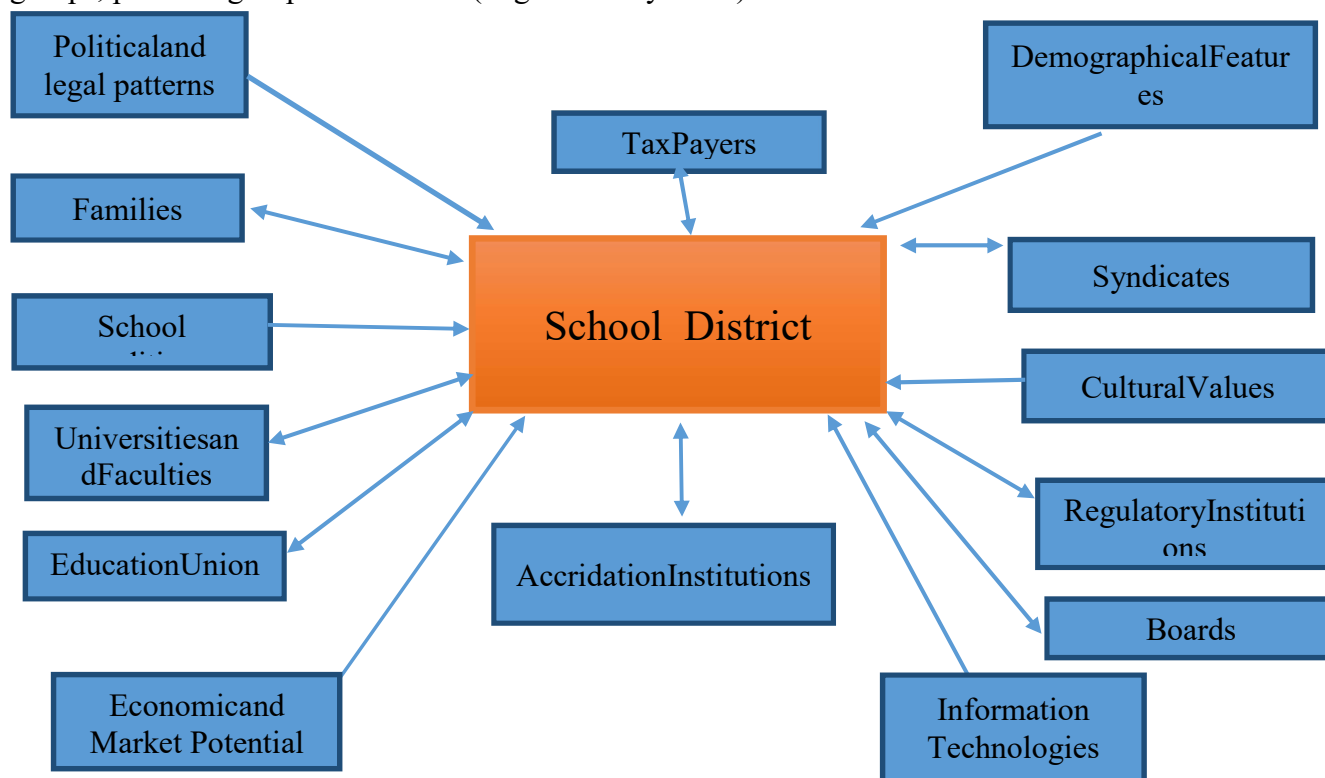
Figure: 2. Chosen extrascholastic factors and environment for the school districts

It is difficult for the schools to continue their existence just with the school administrators and teachers. Providing the general services of the school, maintenance and repair, keeping the track of the school expenditure process will be easier and in a more qualitative way with school-family collaboration. (Epstein, 2001)

In Turkey there is not any legal regulation to directly organize the environmental pressure group activities. But some existing regulations open some doors for such activities and are able to organize the quality of them. There are many definitions for the term 'pressure groups'.

"A group of people organized to persuade a state representative or an authority on a private issue". (Cobuild, 1990)

"An organized group to affect the state representatives or other social groups by means of their administrators or leaders in order to realize their groups' shared benefits".(Ozankaya, 1984)

Influencing Methods of the Pressure Groups

The pressure groups have their own specific public interest terms and an education philosophy based on these ideas. These groups try to direct the school to their own philosophy. (Bursalıoğlu, 1999) Most commonly the pressure groups use money, various reports and the media as a medium for pressure. Trying to convince, threatening, demonstrations, boycotts and strikes, using money (debiting, oppressing gratefulness, bribery,and etc.) and paralyzing the state's performances can be listed under activities of pressure groups. (Meynaud, 1975)

Intrascholastic pressure factors: Administrators, teachers and the staff who are not educators can be listed as internal pressure groups. (Gül, 2006)

Extrascholastic pressure groups can be said to be the groups that are not in the school and that affect the school in an indirect way. (Bursalıoğlu, 1991)

A kiosk opened near the school may affect the students' actions and discipline in a negative manner. (Açıkalın, 1994)

Associations, civil society institutions, trade and industrial groups, political parties, foundations, syndicates, technology and social media, religious groups and bureaucratic pressure groups can be listed as external pressure groups.

As an educational institution the school attracts the attention of interest and power

groups. If the expectations of these groups are not satisfied they pose a pressure on the school and the school system is affected negatively. (Gökçe, 2000)

Pressure groups have been encountered at every period of time and even totalitarian regimes compromised with them. (Kuzu, 1985)

The effects of the pressure groups on the education and educational policy can be analyzed in three telescopic categorical groups. (Thomas, 2002)

1 - Influencing the education by providing educational support.

2 - The effect on the educational content and process.

Method:

This study is a qualitative study conducted to determine the ideas of teachers, administrators, and assistant administrators on environmental pressure groups encountered in the primary school level in Tekirdağ city center. Semi-structured open-ended questions were asked to the subjects who were proposed and accepted the interviews. The obtained data were analyzed and interpreted by means of descriptive analysis method.

In the study the subjects were two different study groups consisting of teachers and administrators. The interviews were applied in 21 schools with 41 subjects 17 of whom were administrators and 24 teachers.

In the qualitative study main and sub-categories have been determined and the data of them have been put in order by taking the socio-economic conditions of the schools in consideration.

First it was divided into two groups as internal and external pressure groups and then the sub-categories of them have been formed. Some themes have been constructed with the data obtained from the subjects.

The main themes are intrascholastic pressure groups (parents, school-family unions and peer groups) and the extrascholastic pressure groups (associations, civil society institution, trade and industrial componies, foundations, technology and social media, religious groups, bureaucratical organisms and the strategies developed by the administrators)

Conclusion and Suggestions:

From the analyses it was obtained that intrascholastic pressure groups had (f=31) %76 contribution to the school, their expectations from the school was (f=49 %10 and their pressure was found to be (f=3) %7. These data proves us that the immediate environment of

the school is not indifferent towards the school and its problems. This is to say, if the parents and the school-family unions want to they can find ways to cope with the schools' problems to some extent.

Furthermore, the low percentage of the pressure shows us that the contribution is in a self-sacrificing and voluntary manner.

As the contribution from the from the extrascholaastic pressure groups is analyzed the sub-categories were determined as generally being about clothing, technology for the school, infrastructure, maintenance and repair support, student loans for the after-school support and stationary support to the school.

When the sub-categories were analyzed the support for the student clothing comes to foreground; %42 of the subjects mentioned such a support. % 48 of the subjects said that the parents have financial support to the school; %28 of the subjects said that the parents became sponsors for the school and %44 of them said that the school accepted donations from the parents.

This shows that the parents are not indifferent towards the school. The subjects stated that the parents had some expectations from the school in return:

- %72 of the subjects said that the parents wanted to have a say in choosing the teachers of their students.
- %44 of the subjects said that the parents wanted their students place in the class to be changed.
- %24 of the subjects said that the parents wanted their students to be enrolled in better classes.
- %16 of the subjects said that the parents wanted higher marks for their students.
- %32 of the subjects said that the parents wanted their students' class to be changed.

In fact these results show that the parents are in the tendency to interfere in the internal issues of the school and class. Thus, this desire of the parents shows that the parents try to direct the teacher and the school to their own aims. The strategies that the school administrators have developed against such a threat have been on the following table.

Table:1

Findings about the Strategies the School Administration have developed		f	%
The strategies that the administrators have developed	Openness	13	93
	Accountability	10	71
	Fairness	12	86
	Application of law and regulations	13	93
	Compliance to general and occupational principles	9	64
	Structuring an institutional culture	8	57
	Mutual benefits	2	14
	Participatory management	5	36
	Using the e-school system	3	21
	Appeasement	0	0
	TOTAL	**75**	**100**

One of the pressure groups that the school personnel can encounter is the media. The relations between the school and media are very important. The schools need the media to transmit their positive messages to the society. (Döşve Cömert, 2012)

Having contributed to the school the parents' expectations from the school rises and sometimes turns into pressure. This pressure is mostly seen in the form of choosing the sitting place and friends of the students and sometimes even changing the class of the student. (Özcan, 2014)

Day by day, the parents being more conscious compared to the past and the civil social institutions interferenceto the school financial issues poses more and more pressure on educational institutions. (Balcı, 2000)

The administrators that have been interviewed stated views in accordance to this theory, especially the parents whose economic conditions are well and could not have a good education themselves in the past want their students to receive a high quality education and pose a pressure on schools by using their higher rank friends, their connections or the media.

1 - It was determined that the extrascholastic pressure groups' contribution to primary school is insuffient.

Because of this:

a - we should construct more relations with these pressure groups and benefit from them according to the educational goals.

b - financial aid to the primary schools that are in financial insufficiency or the primary

schools that do not get enough financial aid from the government can be provided financial help by the pressure groups within the framework of a protocol.

2 - The environmental pressure groups do not consider the primary schools as places of investment for the future.Because of this they are not in tendency to invest or have any expectations.

However:

a - The administrators of the schools can be made more sensitive to the environment and it can be the aim to turn the schools into cultural centers. These relations can have positive effect in favor of both the society and schools.

3 - A similar qualitative and quantitative study should be conducted at private schools, secondary schools, lyceeand at higher education levels.

Resources:

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SECTION № 1: PHILOSOPHY, SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION