

Opinions of school administrators in high image schools on external pressure groups*

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Highlights:

- External pressure groups influence administrators of schools and the demands of these groups.
- Pressure groups place diverse demands ranging from student enrollment and teacher selection to resource allocation
- Parents, the primary sources of pressure, use political figures and public officials to push their requests.
- School administrators accept legally appropriate requests and reject those that violate policies.

Abstract

This research aims to determine the demands of pressure groups towards school administrators working in schools with high image and the behaviors of school administrators towards these demands. The study group consists of 13 school administrators working in the Gebze, İzmit, and Çayırova districts of Kocaeli province in the 2023-2024 academic year. In selecting participants in the study, schools with high images were determined by consulting with district administrators. Interviews were held with 13 school administrators, including nine principals and four deputy principals, from the identified 30 schools. The study group was selected using a purposeful sampling method. In this study, the phenomenology pattern, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews by preparing a semi-structured interview form. The data obtained was analyzed using the content analysis method. Codes, categories, and themes were reached through the answers given by the participants. Data analysis determined that the primary demands made by external pressure groups to the administrators of schools with a high image include attempts to enroll students outside the registration area and teacher selection. Other demands made to schools include student enrollment through donations despite no quota, transfer procedures, enrollment of students in need of special education, class changes, ensuring academic success, individual attention from teachers to students, student participation in social activities, renewal of school equipment, presence of security at the school gate, cleanliness of the school, presence of a sports hall in the school, earlier opening and later closing times for the school, and provision of school transportation. Requests mostly come from parents. It has been observed that parents put pressure on administrators through political authorities and public officials to realize their demands. It has been determined that school administrators accepted the legally appropriate requests and rejected the others.

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1. Introduction

Schools differ from other organizations in interacting extensively with their social environments. Every school has its social environment. While receiving input from this social environment and providing output, it interacts with its environment to a great extent. During this interaction process, schools are affected by and influenced by the external pressure groups around them. School administration plays a leading role in this interaction process. Schools are unique environments where students are provided with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors aligned with education's aims and fundamental principles. The school was established to reduce the adverse effects of the school environment and to reinforce the positive effects of the environment (Balay, 2014). In this process, the roles and duties of school administrators are important. School administrators are the leaders of the internal elements that will realize the school's goals, keep the school structure alive, and protect the school atmosphere (Bursaloğlu, 2022). Educational administrators' responsibilities include meeting society's educational needs, ensuring student development, calculating costs and finding resources, predicting and planning future needs, and monitoring and organizing human resources (Taymaz, 2011).

Considering that school success is directly proportional to school leadership, the role of school leadership in the education system is better understood. Compared to other fields and sectors, education and schools are becoming an area that attracts the attention of many people and institutions. Schools are institutions that transfer necessary knowledge, skills, and values. Therefore, many factors, such as public authorities, political parties, non-governmental organizations, religious groups, and the business world, want to influence schools and attach importance to education (Erdoğan, 2000). Organizations that want to develop close relationships with schools can support schools and school leaders to meet their diverse needs, which can create pressure and tension. Pressures and tensions may also arise from the cultural influence of society and local values. All internal and external factors affecting the management of a school are considered pressure groups. Internal elements are the elements that constitute the school and are included in its structure. Managers, teachers, students, civil servants, and other employees. On the other hand, external factors are not part of the school structure but affect it and, therefore, play a role in management. These external factors include parents, professional organizations such as associations, federations, unions, and political and religious groups (Bursaloğlu, 2022).

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are a limited number of studies on the groups that put pressure on school administrators, the demands of the pressure groups, and the attitudes of school administrators toward these demands. This study attempted to obtain information about the external demands that school principals face while performing their management duties, the sources of these demands, and the behavior of administrators toward these demands.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

There are different definitions of image in literature. The word image comes from the Latin word *imago* (image) and refers to the mental and psychological reflection of a person, organization, product, or event in the human brain (Türkkahraman, 2004). In literature, image is also defined as people's positive or negative thoughts about objects, people, organizations, or institutions (Dichter, 1985). Image perception is a subject that is examined at the individual, employee, department, organization, institution, and even system level. Organizational image is the perception of how internal and external stakeholders view and evaluate the organization (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). In the ever-changing and developing world, the rapid development of technology and science, globalization, and rapid social and cultural changes have led to the emergence of various organizations. Conflict of interest has arisen among many organizations, and to survive and become better known, a competitive environment has been created. Organizations are constantly competing to make more profit, be more popular, maintain their current reputation or be better known, not remain indifferent to the environment and its needs, and be aware of changes and developments (Akbulut, 2015). Like other sectors, the education sector has also become globalized. In the late 20th century, education has become an institution that has begun to compete with its competitors in the competitive environment created by globalization and has been directly affected

by globalization. Undoubtedly, the next step in this struggle is to improve the image of educational institutions. It is no longer sufficient for educational institutions to have a qualified staff or only specific services at the forefront (Duman, 2012). The factors that affect the school image are the professional knowledge, education level, teaching attitudes of teachers; the personality behaviors and work habits of students; school environment, physical facilities, equipment, and atmosphere; school success level, administrative efficiency, student progress and the level of students' placement in university after graduation (Kurşun, 2011).

High-image schools attract talented and experienced people to the organization (Güler, 2001), participate in important projects, are recognized by others, and are reliable as institutions (Erdal & Gücüyeter, 2013). They are respected, reliable, hardworking, and promising institutions with a presence in the public or target audience (Taşkın & Sönmez, 2001). Schools with a high image are preferred institutions due to their positive features. Thus, these are schools where the influence of pressure groups is felt more. With the development of modern democracies, pressure groups, which have an increasing influence on political life, are considered a subtype of social groups that constitute democratic society and have basic characteristics. Pressure groups formed to protect their interests aim to fulfill their wishes by influencing the government (Kapani, 1993). Pressure groups are individuals or communities that come together for a benefit and try to influence power centers to achieve these benefits, either covertly or openly (Kapani, 2007).

Like other organizations, school organizations are influenced by external pressure groups. Political institutions, associations, federations, unions, and foundations are external pressure groups in terms of influencing schools and school administrators (Bursalioğlu, 2022). In the research conducted by Şenyiğit (2019), it was stated that the pressure groups affecting the school administration are (a) families, (b) bureaucrats and local administrators, (c) commercial structures, (d) tribal and opinion leaders, (e) unions, (f) teachers and other school administrators, (g) local press, (h) political party representatives. The administrators of these schools, who attract the attention of pressure groups within the school environment, are sometimes exposed to the demands of external pressure groups. Pressure groups feel they have common interests within society and work in an organized manner to achieve their goals by influencing public officials (Aybay, 2011). Pressure groups have their characteristics in terms of formation. From this point of view, it can be seen that they do not all have the same purpose and have different perspectives. Pressure groups are generally considered to be two different types. These are groups that focus on shared interests and common attitudes. We can give examples of groups that focus on common interests, such as unions and various professional groups. Groups that gather around common attitudes aim to achieve common goals and ensure unity of ideals, not professional or material interests. Members of such groups may come from different occupations or ethnic groups. Pressure groups can be considered civil elements that influence the public sphere to benefit society or various groups (Şenaras, 2017). This study considered external pressure groups such as political authority groups, parents, public opinion, associations, foundations, and unions.

1.1.1. Political Authority Groups

Turkish public institutions generally act according to various directives from multiple sources. In particular, representatives of ruling parties can form important interest groups in public institutions. The demands and pressures of these groups prioritize individual or group interests over the efficient functioning of the organization. For this reason, local administrators and political authority representatives in the regions where the schools are located put pressure on teachers, school personnel, parents, and especially the education administration. When managers become politicized, the organization they belong to gains a political dimension, and in such cases, managers try to achieve political goals rather than organizational goals (Yiğit & Bayraktar, 2016).

1.1.2. Parents

Families are the group with which school administrators communicate most frequently. Families with parent organizations may have different expectations regarding school management, depending on

their position and evaluations. The biggest problem for schools is that parents pressure school administrators and teachers to line up with their expectations or insist that they be met (Bursaloğlu, 2022). Some parents may use their position in society or their economic power to put pressure on school administrators and teachers. This pressure varies depending on the parents' profession, education level, and economic power (Yiğit & Bayraktar, 2016).

1.1.3. Public Opinion

The concept of public opinion is the "general judgment" or opinion at a particular point in time about a particular issue that concerns people. However, we should not forget that we can never say that everyone has the same common opinion on any issue. On the contrary, society will have many opposing views regarding the issue in question. On the other hand, although it is often possible to claim that publicly accepted views include views supported by the majority, it is also possible that these views are strongly adopted by a minority (Daver, 1993).

1.1.4. Unions

It is a non-governmental organization established to improve and develop the working and living conditions of education unions, teachers, and other public and private employees and ensure solidarity among them. The general objectives of education unions are to protect and develop the economic, social, personal, and professional needs of education unions and to produce projects that provide a more respectful standard of living for their members (Eraslan, 2012). Unions are active interest groups that play an important role in the operation of schools. Unions assist management through coordination and cooperation to create a competent environment for public employees and solve educational personnel's problems. Therefore, education administrators need to support the development of unions (Bursaloğlu, 2022). Although unions try to protect the interests of employees, they can sometimes be biased due to their tendency to be biased or take political positions. For this reason, unions organized in education can pressure their interlocutors on issues affecting schools, the education system, and their fields of activity in educational environments (Öztürk, 2013).

1.1.5. Foundations and Associations

Other external pressure groups that affect schools are foundations and associations established for mutual aid. Foundations and associations are pressure groups that influence school administrators to carry out their activities and promotions. There are requests from foundations and associations to advertise themselves in schools, to inform about their activities with posters and brochures, and to organize poetry, book reading, short films, and composition competitions at the provincial level (Özcan, 2014).

Schools are organizations that operate in a complex environment and must respond to the demands of various stakeholders (Coburn, 2004). Institutional theory has been the dominant approach in contemporary organizational studies to understand how organizations respond to their external environments (Greenwood et al., 2008). According to institutional theory, legally established legitimate organizations not only have to adapt to the technical issues in the environment but also have to adapt to the demands and respond to expectations from the sociocultural environment of the school around the organization's rules (Diehl & Golann, 2023).

School administrators should be aware of the school's external environment and know environmental forces and external pressure groups well to manage school-society relations effectively. School administrators should be aware of the overt and covert objectives of environmental forces and external pressure groups outside the school. School principals should look for the right solutions regarding the school's goals and how to balance them (Balay, 2014). If school administrators cannot achieve this balance, they may be influenced by social pressure groups. This situation may prevent administrators from making healthy decisions and may make it difficult for the school to achieve its goals (İnandı, 2014; Şenyiğit, 2019).

Studies examine the effects of external pressure groups on school administrators (Özcan, 2014; Şenyiğit, 2019). However, these studies are not conducted based on the specific characteristics of schools; instead, they are carried out for more general studies. This research focused on examining the impact of external pressure groups on the administrators of schools with high images. School image is an important predictor of parents' behavior. It has been found that parents' interest and loyalty are higher in schools with a higher image (Li & Hung, 2009). While an established and developed school image can improve the school, it can fail if the expectations and needs of the groups that interact with the school (e.g. parents) are ignored (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001). External pressure groups may influence schools with high images more than other schools because schools with high images attract more attention from society. This research is important in terms of examining the effects of external pressure groups on schools with high images.

1.2. The Purpose of the Research

The research aims to determine what external pressures are on schools with high image, what kind of demands external pressure groups have from school administrators, and to reveal how school administrators behave towards these demands. In line with the overall aim of the research, the following questions were addressed:

- 1) What are the demands of external pressure groups from administrators of schools with a high image?
- 2) What external pressure groups make demands on schools with a high image?
- 3) How do administrations of high-image schools react to the demands of external pressure groups?

2. Method

2.1. Design of the Research

This research was carried out using the phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods. Phenomenological research is a research design that seeks to describe phenomena that are commonplace in everyday life but are not fully understood through the exploration of individuals' lived experiences (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). Phenomenological research aims to understand the essence of a phenomenon by exploring the in-depth experiences of individuals who have lived through it (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research aims to explore the depth of phenomena based on the experiences of individuals (Özdemir, 2010).

2.2. Study Group

The study group of the research was determined by using the homogeneous sampling selection technique, one of the purposeful sampling selection techniques among qualitative research sample selection methods. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling approach. Purposive sampling allows for detailed research by selecting information-rich cases based on research objectives and examining one or more specific cases that meet certain criteria or have certain characteristics. Researchers try to understand natural and social events and phenomena in the context of a selected situation and to discover and explain the connections between them (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020).

In the analogous sampling technique, the sample is formed from individuals who have similar experiences with the research problem (Strauss & Corbin, 2014). In selecting participants in the study, schools with a high image were determined by first interviewing district administrators. Interviews were held with 13 school administrators from 30 selected schools. The research participants comprised nine principals and four vice principals working in schools located in the Çayırova, Gebze, and İzmit districts of Kocaeli Province. The descriptive characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of participants

Participant	Management Position	School Type	Education Level	Union Information	Professional Seniority	Gender
Manager 1	Deputy Principal	Primary School	Postgraduate	Eğitim-İş	18	Man
Manager 2	Deputy Principal	Primary School	Doctorate	Hürriyetçi Eğitim-Sen	16	Man
Manager 3	Principal	Secondary School	Bachelor	Eğitim Bir-Sen	18	Man
Manager 4	Principal	Secondary School	Bachelor	Eğitim Bir-Sen	43	Man
Manager 5	Deputy Principal	Secondary School	Postgraduate	Türk Eğitim-Sen	17	Man
Manager 6	Principal	High School	Postgraduate	Eğitim Bir-Sen	20	Man
Manager 7	Principal	High School	Postgraduate	Eğitim Bir-Sen	26	Man
Manager 8	Principal	Primary school	Doctorate Student	Türk Eğitim-Sen	34	Woman
Manager 9	Principal	Secondary School	Bachelor	Eğitim-İş	35	Man
Manager 10	Principal	Primary School	Postgraduate	Eğitim Bir-Sen	24	Man
Manager 11	Deputy Principal	High School	Postgraduate	Türk Eğitim-Sen	20	Man
Manager 12	Principal	Primary School	Postgraduate	Maarif-Sen	27	Man
Manager 13	Principal	High School	Postgraduate	Türk Eğitim-Sen	13	Woman

2.3. Data Collection Tools

The data of the research was collected through interview technique. Interview is a commonly used data collection tool in qualitative research. It is an effective technique for obtaining information about individuals' feelings, thoughts, experiences, and complaints (Sevencan & Çilingiroğlu, 2007). The researcher used the semi-structured interview form developed during the data collection process. This form was developed based on literature review and expert opinion and consists of two parts. The first part includes the participant's personal information, and the second part includes the interview questions.

The following questions were asked to the study group for the research:

What kind of demands do you receive from external pressure groups because your school has a high image?

What external pressure groups are making demands because your school has a high image?

How do you react to the demands of external pressure groups towards your school? How do you behave in response to these demands?

2.4. Collecting Data

Interviews were conducted with principals and vice principals of schools requested by parents in Çayırova, Gebze, and İzmit districts of Kocaeli province. Interviews were conducted with participants who volunteered to participate in the study and were audio-recorded with the participants' consent. Participants were informed that their names and identity information would be kept confidential. At the end of the interviews, additional questions were asked to gather more detailed information from the participants. Before the interviews, the interview questions were shared with school administrators for review, and clarifications were provided as needed. Data were collected between October and December 2023. Interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes.

2.5. Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis, which involves a) coding data, b) identifying themes, c) organizing codes and data, and d) defining and interpreting results. In this technique, similar

information is coded under specific themes to identify them systematically (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2021). The data obtained from audio recordings were transcribed into text to create qualitative data. Qualitative data analysis involves categorizing and interpreting data to extract meaning and provide insights into the dataset. The process can also describe and explain structures, processes, or field problems in everyday and practical contexts (Çelik et al., 2020). First of all, the audio recordings were transcribed. The responses given by the managers to the interview questions were coded as M1, M2, M3,... The obtained data were coded and divided into categories and themes. Direct quotes were included to increase credibility in the interpretation of the data.

2.6. Validity and Reliability

Criteria such as credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability must be provided to test the validity and reliability of qualitative studies. To increase credibility (internal validity) in qualitative research, techniques such as long-term interaction, expert review, in-depth data collection, participant confirmation, and triangulation are recommended (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To bolster the study's credibility, expert input was obtained to assess whether the interview questions were aligned with the research objectives. Appropriate environment and time were created for the participants to feel comfortable during the interviews. Interviews were conducted in an environment of trust, and attempts were made to ensure long-term interaction with the participants. Participant confirmation was obtained by repeating what they said from time to time. Data were added or removed based on participants' feedback on whether there was anything they wanted to add or remove. Data were diversified by conducting interviews with participants from different schools and with different characteristics. While analyzing the data, assistance was received from an academician to confirm the analysis. In order to ensure transferability (external validity) in qualitative research, researchers are expected to provide in-depth information. One way to provide in-depth and broad-scale information is to use the purposive sampling technique when selecting a sample (Lincoln ve Guba, 1985). In this study, the homogeneous sampling technique, one of the purposeful sampling techniques, was used to ensure transferability. The opinions of the participants who experienced the subject were used. In addition, the data collection and analysis process were explained in detail in the method section to ensure transferability.

To ensure the research's consistency (internal reliability), extra questions were asked to the participants. It has been observed that similar answers were given to similar questions. The research results were interpreted by comparing them with the information in the literature. To ensure the confirmability of the research (external reliability), the research findings and results were compatible with the data. For confirmability, it is recommended that research findings and results should be based on data and that information not based on data should not be presented. Comments should not be made (Given & Saumure, 2008). To ensure confirmability in the research, direct opinions of the participants were included when interpreting the findings.

Two researchers analyzed and coded the study's data separately to be subjected to the reliability form of Miles and Huberman (1994). They identified codes on which the two researchers reached a consensus and those on which they disagreed. The study's reliability was calculated using the reliability formula [$\text{Reliability} = (\text{Consensus} / (\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement}))$] developed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which was found to be 80%.

3. Results

3.1. Findings Regarding the Demands of External Pressure Groups on Schools with High-Image

The first question of the research was, "What are the demands of external pressure groups from the administrators of schools with a high image?" To find an answer to this question, the following question was posed to school principals and vice principals: "What kind of demands do you receive from external pressure groups because of your school's high image?" The demands of external pressure groups on schools with a high image were examined in the context of school administrators' views, and they are shown in Table 2 under themes and categories.

Based on the participants' views, the demands from external pressure groups on schools with a high image are grouped under four sub-themes: demands for registration procedures, demands for education and training, demands for school facilities, and demands for the interests of pressure groups.

One of the demands that external pressure groups make on the school administration is regarding registration procedures. These requests have occurred in the form of registration of students whose addresses are outside the registration area, registration of students with donations outside of the quota, transfer transactions, and registration of students needing special education. School administrators have stated that external pressure groups sometimes pressure them to enroll students not residing in the school's student recruitment area. For example, a school manager (M2) stated, *"Even though the address does not match, there is a request to enroll the student. Even though the student's address is not in the registration area, the parents want to register the student to school and intervene with various resources. The director of national education, anyone in the governor's office, religious groups, political party leaders, and even members of parliament are involved and want to register the student for school even though the address does not match. This creates pressure on the administrators. Another demand of external pressure groups on school administration is the desire to enroll students even though the school quota is full."* For example, M5 drew attention to this issue by saying, *"The image of our school is better than other regional schools, and since we are a school with a vision, there are also more demands. Some offer donations to register students to the school"*.

Table 2. Demands of external pressure groups on schools with high image

Themes	Categories
Requests for Registration Procedures	Registration of students whose address is outside the registration area Student registration outside of quota by donation Student transfers Registration of students with special education needs
Requests for Education and Training Affairs	Teacher preference Class change Ensuring academic success The teacher's special attention to the student Participation of students in social activities Renewing school equipment
Requests for School Facilities	Having security at the door Cleaning the school Having a gym at the school Opening the school earlier and closing it later Providing school transportation
Groups' requests for their own interests	The demand of religious groups to advertise themselves The demand for organizations to organize events in schools

Another issue putting pressure on school management is the registration of students with special education needs. M6 expressed his thoughts on this issue as follows: *"We have 18 integrated students in the sixth grade in our school. Integrated students, that is, children with special education needs who have a report, can easily register in many schools. These students can be enrolled in any school they want to go. Since our guidance service is very active, there has been much demand from children with special education needs."*

The demands for education and training are categorized as teacher preference, classroom change, ensuring academic success, teacher's special attention to students, and students' participation in social activities.

Regarding teacher preference, one of the participants (M1) stated, *"The demands are usually about teacher preference. Our school is successful, and our teachers are successful teachers who are confident in themselves. All of our teachers are hardworking, but some of them have a reputation, and parents focus on those teachers. This situation upsets other teachers and annoys us as the school administration."*

Another participant, M7, said, *"Parents often express their desire for their children to have specific teachers. For instance, they might say, My child is not satisfied with the Math teacher; I would like a different one."*

Academic success is another demand that stands out in the theme of demands for education and training. Regarding this request, Manager 6 stated, "Due to our school's high reputation, parents have the highest expectation that our students will be placed in selective universities upon graduation. The most significant pressure we face arises from this expectation. We feel an inevitable psychological need to place the student, who makes up only three or four percent of enrollment, in a specific university through the university entrance exam." Administrator 13 stated, "First of all, our parents have high expectations of success. Since the students are successful, they do not accept decreased written or performance grades. They constantly question and search on this issue. They especially question the professional experiences and work of the teachers."

Another request regarding education and training affairs is a change of classroom. M9 drew attention to this issue by saying, "There are many requests for class changes. We have a student behavior evaluation board. They decide together with the guidance service, and if they see a need, we change the student's classroom."

School principals also receive requests for teachers to pay special attention to students. M12 expressed her thoughts on this issue: "The class mother always wants her child to be taken care of. When the teacher says that she has to treat them equally, she immediately gets upset and tries to create problems." M8 said: "The parent always wants her child to attend the programs. For example, we had an incident 2 years ago. An event was going to be held for the Red Crescent week. Our hall has a capacity of 80 people. We said that 4 students from each class should come. The teacher lined up the students in the class for the events. For example, 4 students will attend this week's event, and the other 4 will attend next week's event. The parent started a fight with the teacher about why her child didn't attend the event. She wanted the money she donated to buy a computer for the class back." This statement indicated that another request made to the school administration was the student's participation in social events.

Requests regarding the school's physical environment were gathered in the categories of renewing school equipment, having security at the door, having a clean school, having a gym at the school, opening the school earlier and closing it later, and providing transportation services. When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the most prominent demand regarding the school's physical environment is the demand for security. One participant (M5) said, "...For example, the expectation of security. We have school security outside. We never let anyone in from outside. We do not let the student out easily. Security is one of the biggest demands of the parents."

In the theme of groups' demands for their own interests, a participant (M10) in the category of religious groups' desire to advertise themselves said, "We receive requests from religious organizations and foundations to announce their competitions." Regarding the organizations' desire to hold events at school, Manager 12 commented, "Some entertainment organizations also request to hold plays or shows at school."

3.2. Findings on which pressure groups demand the most from the schools with high image

The second question of the research was formulated as "What are the external pressure groups that demand high-image schools?" To find an answer to this question, the following question was posed to school principals and vice principals: "Which external pressure groups make demands because your school has a high image?"

Table 3 presents the participants' views on which external pressure groups are driving demands for schools with high images.

Table 3. External pressure groups on schools with high-image

Themes	Categories
External Pressure Groups Making Demands	Parents Political Authorities Public Officials

When Table 3 is examined, the sources of the requests are grouped into three categories: parents, political authorities, and public officials.

When asked, "Where do the demands come from?" many participants responded that they came from parents. One participant stated, *"The majority of requests originate from parents. Due to the efficient operation of our guidance service, we also receive inquiries from parents of children requiring special education"* (M5). According to the data analysis, parents request assistance from public authorities, including neighborhood heads, district education directors, provincial education directors, district governors, and governors, to meet their demands. Under this category, administrator 4 expressed his opinions: *"Parents have demands on schools. To meet these demands, parents involve bureaucrats, education directors, representatives of political parties, local governments and municipalities officials, and even authorities from different provinces at the provincial level."* Manager 8 stated, *"Many of the requests we receive at our school come from our parents. In addition to parents, we also receive requests from district governor's office staff, hometown associations, the village head, provincial and district national education directorates, members of political parties, education unions, and businessmen from time to time"*. It has been observed that parents have attempted to involve political authorities to fulfill their demands. For example, M3 stated, *"I have received calls from parents, as well as from the highest levels of bureaucracy, including the Deputy Minister of National Education. I have received two calls from ministry advisors. I have also received requests from the local Member of Parliament, the district mayor and his deputies, the mayor of a neighboring district, and even our district governor."* Manager 9 remarked, *"The requests originate from parents. Parents are seeking the assistance of various individuals to meet their demands. These individuals include presidential advisors, members of parliament, mayors, city council members, and political party leaders. There is no pressure but requests are being made"*

3.3. Findings on the Responses of Administrators of Schools with High Image to the Demands of External Pressures

The study's third question is: "How do school administrations of schools with high image behave when faced with demands from external pressure groups?". To answer this question, school and vice principals were asked, 'How do you respond to demands from external pressure groups on your school? What behaviors do you exhibit when you are faced with these demands?'

Table 4 categorizes participants' responses regarding their behaviors when confronted with demands placed on schools with a high image.

Table 4. Reactions of school administrators to demands

Themes	Categories
Behavior in Response to Requests	Fulfillment of the Request
	Opposition to Request

The behaviors displayed in response to demands have been classified into two categories: Fulfilling the demand and opposition to the demand. Under the "fulfilling the demand," M5 commented, *"Of course, these demands tire us out, as they are outside our work and field. However, we try to meet these demands within the limits of the national education system, the school's resources, and the environmental conditions."* Similarly, M1 expressed his thoughts: *"We examine the requests from our parents. We try to contribute as much as possible in areas where we can help them."*

It was determined that managers declined non-compliant requests with rules and regulations. Manager 3 expressed his stance on this issue:

"Since the number of students is determined based on the classroom size, we have never encountered any problems with student admissions. From the first day we opened, we have never admitted any students through favoritism, money, or other means. Manager 7, on the other hand, stated, "They try to involve political party members and bureaucrats. No matter where the request comes from, we do not compromise on student admissions. Those who exceed the absenteeism limit want their absences to be excused, but we do not deviate from the regulations in this matter. If they can prove their excuse, we act to prevent losing the student."

4. Discussion and Conclusion

When considering the effects of external pressure groups on schools, the diversity of these groups and their methods of influence can be quite decisive. Pressure groups can influence school decision-making processes from a variety of perspectives, and this can have significant implications for education, society, and the economy. However, it should not be forgotten that not all of these effects are destructive or negative. External pressure groups in schools are usually formed around various concerns and interests. For example, these groups may focus on personal interests such as economic or student needs or broader societal issues like education, social, economic, and political matters. These groups may attempt to influence school administrators through communication, education, persuasion, or propaganda. However, this influence is generally proportional to the content and characteristics of the situation. In other words, the activities of pressure groups are not always negative or destructive. In particular, bureaucracy, families, public opinion, unions, and other factors are among the groups that influence school administration (Önk et al., 2023). These factors play a significant role in influencing decision-making processes within schools. However, this situation must be balanced with the need for transparency and accountability. In his 2015 study, Liljenberg examined the relationship between the school environment, external stakeholders, and other local organizations using the institutional theory framework. Within this framework, he highlighted the necessity for the school to conform to the pressures exerted by its external environment. In this process, the importance of school administration considering accountability and democratic principles has been emphasized.

According to the results of the interviews conducted as part of the research, the most common demands made by external pressure groups on school principals were related to education and teaching activities. These were followed by requests concerning enrollment procedures, demands regarding school resources, and demands directly benefiting the pressure groups themselves. It has been concluded that the most prominent demands related to education and teaching are focused on teacher selection and improving academic achievement. It was observed that there were requests to enroll students who reside outside the designated school district in the category of enrollment-related demands. In this sense, it resembles the findings of Şenyiğit's (2019) study. The presence of security guards at the entrance is among the leading demands related to school resources in educational institutions.

According to administrators, when examining the demands of external pressure groups on schools with a high image, the request for teacher preference has been frequently emphasized. According to administrators, the fact that some teachers become more popular than others leads to a preference among some students and parents. In terms of student enrollment and quotas, enrollments made through political influence or connections can exert pressure on school administrations. Enrollments outside the designated area or special preferences can sometimes affect enrollment and create bureaucratic difficulties. Demands for enhanced security are at the forefront of parental concerns, leading schools to prioritize external security measures and student safety. The various demands and interactions faced by educational institutions are among the issues that school administrations must carefully consider. According to Liljenberg (2015), school principals act as integrative leaders who mediate between the demands of external pressure groups and the internal values of the school. Consequently, establishing transparent policies by school principals concerning teacher selection, student enrollment, and security, coupled with their fair adjudication of these matters, can significantly contribute to the health and equilibrium of educational institutions.

In this study, which examined the views of the administrators of schools with high external pressure groups, it was seen that the external pressure groups affecting the school administration were parents, bureaucrats, local administrators, and political party representatives. This classification is similar to the classification obtained in the studies conducted by Şen and Anar (2022). Unlike these studies, the school principals interviewed stated that unions are no longer a pressure factor as they used to be. In schools with a high image, parents play an active role in making their demands on the school. Parents tend to direct school administration, especially in line with their expectations regarding their students' education. Parents' primary concerns center around their children's demands and expectations related

to their education and school life. When parents' demands are not met, it has been observed that they exert pressure on school administrations through local politicians and political figures (Özcan, K. 2014). Individuals or institutions with political connections can influence enrollment processes, teacher selection, and the decisions of schools with high image. This situation can create pressure on school administrators at various levels. It is sometimes stated that these expectations, particularly specific ones, create pressure and vulnerability for school administrators. (Vandenberghe, 1998). By issuing a directive in 2024 to determine first-grade classes and teachers in primary schools and fifth-grade classes in middle schools through e-Okul, the Ministry of National Education aimed to eliminate external pressures on school administrators regarding these matters. In this way, the Ministry of National Education has developed a system that eliminates the authority and influence of school administrators in selecting teachers and assigning students to classes. The Ministry of National Education has added a module to the e-Okul system that automatically assigns students to classes and teachers. Implementing this module is intended to neutralize external pressures exerted by interest groups on school administrators regarding assigning students to classes and teachers.

Coburn (2004) categorizes approaches to external pressures into five main headings: rejection, segregation, parallel institution building, assimilation, and accommodation. As a result of this research, it was found that school administrators adopted two main approaches: fulfilling requests and opposing them. Rejecting a request can be considered as compliance. Opposing to accept the request can be considered rejection. The approaches of segregation, parallel institution building, and assimilation, proposed by Coburn (2004) as responses to external pressures, were not observed in this study. When examining the behaviors of managers in response to requests, it was observed that they were particularly strict in terms of treating individuals with favoritism. This attitude demonstrates a stance against student registrations and recruitment through favoritism or external factors. While adhering to laws and maintaining impartiality, there is a strong emphasis on resisting external pressures and avoiding deviating from established rules. On the other hand, under the theme of 'fulfilling requests,' a flexible approach is taken depending on the source and nature of the requests. This approach is characterized by examining the demands and trying to meet them within the possibilities. The process of coping with demands in educational institutions is shaped by different stances and approaches. Various factors, such as adhering to the law and impartiality, resisting pressures, and also examining and meeting demands within the means, determine how the school administration approaches demand. This situation highlights the importance of flexibility, fairness, and transparency in management and policy-making in education. In this context, demonstrating a balanced and fair approach to demands can ensure educational institutions operate in a healthier environment. According to Vandenberghe (1998), meeting the demands of external pressure groups is the responsibility of the school administration under the psychological contract. When meeting the demands, the demands of the school and the pressure groups must be balanced. Liljenberg (2015) emphasized the importance of accountability in meeting the demands of external pressure groups.

Demands from external pressure groups on schools with high images should be evaluated within the principle of legality in management. Meeting legal demands that do not harm the school will strengthen school-community relations. Addressing the demands of external pressure groups within an ethical framework by school administrators will contribute to balancing the demands of these groups with the school's operational system. Developing legislation to prevent those in political power from making non-compliant demands on school administrations will facilitate the work of school administrators. Training school administrators to approach external pressure groups will help them overcome implementation challenges. The impacts of external pressure groups on schools with high images can be investigated through quantitative research. The impact of gender of school administrators in schools with high image on fulfilling the demands of external pressure groups can be examined. Internal pressure groups in schools with high image, their demands, and impacts can be examined.

Statement of Researchers

Researchers' contribution rate statement:

Both authors contributed equally to the present study.

Conflict statement:

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement:

The data supporting this study's findings are available on request from the corresponding author. However, the data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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