THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE PRINCIPAL’S USE OF POWER AND
THE TEACHERS’ SELF-PERCEPTION OF PROFESSIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the high school principals’ use of power and teacher’s self-perception of professionalism. Seven bases of power were explored during this study: (a) reward power, (b) coercive power, (c) legitimate power, (d) referent power, (e) expert power, (f) information power, and (g) connection power. Four dimensions of professionalism were identified as subscales and were: (a) personal characteristics, (b) commitment to change and continuous improvement, (c) subject and pedagogical knowledge, and (d) activities beyond the classroom.

The quantitative study combined two data collection tools, the Power Perception Profile – Perception of Other and the Teacher Professionalism Inventory-Self, to provide opportunity for teachers to describe their current perceptions of their principal’s use of power and their self-perception of professionalism. While no relationships were identified as being statistically significant, findings did suggest that teachers’ self-perception of professionalism was both directly and inversely related to the principal’s use of power. Principals who understand how their use of power grows or hinders their teacher’s sense of professionalism equips them with the necessary tools to foster professional development that is both positive and beneficial to the teachers.