

The Lecture Contains:

- ☰ Types of social power
- ☰ Informational power
- ☰ Reward and coercive power
- ☰ Expert power
- ☰ Referent power
- ☰ Legitimate power

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Comparison of different bases of power

- In this lecture, we are going to learn about the experiments conducted to compare different bases of power. In particular, as research patterns indicate, comparisons have been made among the following bases of power :
 - Coercion-reward, expert, referent
 - Legitimate and coercive power
 - Expert and referent power
 - Informational and expert power

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Coercion-reward, expert, and referent

- In an interesting study, Herbert Kelman (1958) tried to explore the differences among coercive-reward, expert, and referent bases of power. At that time in the early 1950s in the USA, there was a general acceptance among the black students that there should be a total integration of schools and college irrespective of the racial background of the students.
- He played a tape-recorded message that accentuated that for preserving the Negro culture, all-black universities should be maintained as such, even if there was an attempt by the government to integrate the universities. He, however, also informed the three different groups of student participants that the message was given by three different communicators.
- In one group, it was told to the participants that the message was given by a very powerful president of a foundation for Negro college and that there were reward and punishment to be given by the communicator for complying and not complying to the message respectively (a source of coercion-reward power). Another group was told that the message it listened to came from a very popular president of student council at a leading all-black university (a source of referent power). The third group was communicated that the message came from a professor of history, an expert in the field of minority groups (a source of expert power).
- The results of the study showed that the expert power was the most effective as the participants of the group where the communicator was the history professor changed their opinion in the direction of the message more than the other groups.

Legitimate and coercive power

- Raven and French (1958) conducted an experiment where task for the participants in all the four groups was to cut patterns out of cardboards. In all the four group the leader was either assigned or elected and either gave punishment (if her commands were not followed) or refrained from it. Following was the nature of the four groups :

	Leader Elected	Leader Assigned
Punishment Given	Legitimate Coercive Power	Non-Legitimate Coercive Power
No Punishment Given	Legitimate Non-Coercive Power	Non-Legitimate Non-Coercive Power

- The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the power based on coercion and legitimacy in general. But, in an informal private interaction, the participants accepted the leader's request when her power legitimate rather than being coercive. The legitimate power also showed a better liking and perception of the leader's ability among the participants than in the case where the coercive power was used.

Expert and referent power

- In a study, Raven, Mansson, and Anthony (1962) created experimental conditions where the participants were asked whether they received the extrasensory perception (ESP) originating from an adjacent room (in reality there was no such source of ESP arranged for in the adjacent room).
- In the first of the two experimental groups (with four participants in each group), each member was told that the other three members was only above 'average' on receiving ESP (a source of referent power). However, in the second group, each member was told that the other three members were 'very keen and reliable' on ESP (a source of expert power).
- The results indicated that both the expert and referent power were effective but in different ways. In the first group, the participants reported receiving the ESP but did not believe in them. However, in the second group, the participants did not report ESP but their belief in them increased.

Informational and expert power

- In the previously mentioned Kelman's (1958) study, we noticed that the participants apparently paid more attention to the message when it was told to be coming from an expert. The information was received in a persuasive way and had a more long-lasting effect.
- However, other studies have shown that if the expert was distrusted or disliked, the information had an impact opposite to its contents. Hovland and Weiss (1952) reported that when a lecture on the value of antihistamines as a cold remedy was given by a trusted source, a professor of biology and medicine, it was more influential than when the same lecture was given by an untrustworthy source, a drug manufacturer with a vested interest.

