A Comparison of the Burnout Levels of Teachers with Different Occupational Satisfaction Sources

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Abstract
The aim of this research is to investigate whether professional satiety sources predict burnout in teachers. Professional values, including satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the teaching profession, are investigated using the Professional Satiety Inventory. Of 698 teachers, 478 primary school teachers were chosen randomly as the research group. Using the “Professional Satiety Inventory,” the teachers were initially divided into ten groups according to their “occupational satisfaction sources.” In addition, the “Maslach Burnout Inventory,” was used to examine which professional satiety sources predicted emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. Based on results of this study, the occupational values for the teaching profession in Turkey were defined as being satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Keywords
Depersonalization, Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment, Professional Satiety Sources.

Burnout has been defined as feelings of exhaustion, long-lasting fatigue, despair and hopelessness, negative self-concept and a syndrome with physical, emotional and mental dimensions, including negative attitudes toward a job, life and other individuals, which can be measured across three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, low feelings of personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion includes feeling tired and excessively weary from emotion. A feeling of low personal accomplishment is defined as a person’s negative self-assessment and the absence of personal accomplishment. Depersonalization can be seen in a person’s behavior toward others who have provided them with care or service without considering the individual as a unique individual and in a manner that is deprived of emotion (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

An individual feeling burnout generally becomes aware that they are coping with a complex sensation of personal professional dissatisfaction and fatigue. However, the difficulty in expressing these feelings and the absence of specific expectations cause them to frequently disregard this state of being. However, the cost of disregarding burnout is the loss of desire for their job (Dolan, 1987). Work satisfaction is a feeling gained from professional work which give a feeling of satisfaction similar to that gained from gaining a prize (Yildiz, 2012).

The most evident form of lack of desire for a job is when the worker states that they are dissatisfied with their work. In a study investigating assistant family physician burnout levels and their relationships with socio-demographic and educational variables (Yaman & Ungan, 2002), it was observed that the development of burnout affects an individual’s attitude toward their job. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between an individual’s burnout level and their professional dissatisfaction.

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Not only might professional dissatisfaction be the reason for burnout, but the increase in the level of burnout might also affect an individual’s attitude toward work and, hence, their profession. In both cases, both the individual’s work and their profession are harmed.

Burnout develops when an individual does not believe and refuses to acknowledge that there is something wrong. This state is known as energy exhaustion, in which the person feels continuous hopelessness and negativity. Burnout could be seen as professional autism (Storlie, 1979), which occurs as a result of a progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose. For teachers, burnout can result from issues such as insecurity in the profession, health problems, bureaucratic obstacles and conditions related to the working environment, teaching students who lack motivation, time pressure and workload, coping with change, fear of negative evaluation, dealing with colleagues, role conflict and ambiguity, and poor working conditions (Yazıcı, 2009).

When psychological burnout increases, there is a decrease in job satisfaction and eventually, an abandonment of the teaching profession (Burke & Greenglass, 1989). However, teacher burnout levels are not the same for every teacher, as each teacher may have different reasons for their burnout. For example, for some teachers, the poor working environment might not be important. In this case, the poor workings condition would not disturb these teachers or significantly affect their burnout levels. However, a teacher who is not bothered about poor working conditions might feel uncomfortable about another variable. For example, they might feel uncomfortable about their professional incompetence, and their burnout level might increase. The variables related to teacher burnout levels result from both the teaching profession and a teacher’s personality. Namely, if a teacher is incompetent, their burnout level increases during their career; if this individual could competently perform, their burnout level would not increase. However, a teacher’s burnout might result from both an absent quality (competence) and a quality that their profession does not fulfill.

Randall and Scott (1981) obtained results regarding job dissatisfaction that were generated from the negative aspects of a job; however, burnout was found to be related to both the negative aspects of a job and a person’s perspective and values (as cited in Ormen, 1993). These individual differences have been observed in the how people seek satisfaction. Individuals who choose a particular profession with the hope of obtaining satisfaction might not achieve final satisfaction. In addition to the differences in the satisfaction possibilities that a profession can provide, differences also appear according to the expectations of those in the profession (Savaş, 1984).

The results of previous studies conducted on teachers have indicated that there is minimal relationship between burnout and some demographic variables. In a study conducted by Tümkaya (1996), more burn out was observed in male teachers compared to female teachers, high school teachers compared to elementary school teachers and vice principals compared to other teacher groups. In a study conducted on nurses, Çam (1989) observed significant relationships between emotional burnout and having children, time spent working, and obtaining support from senior workers. In a study investigating the burnout levels of nurses, Özer, Ekinci, Bağ, and Kirpnar (1997) observed that job-related characteristics, such as age, division of labor, number of patients, satisfaction from the profession, suitability for the profession, relationships with colleagues, support from colleagues and patients and the working environment, were important when considering burnout. However, individual characteristics, such as marital status and the number of children, did not affect burnout.

The significant relationship between stress and dissatisfaction and psychological and physical burnout, has attracted attention. However, the following reasons have been found to be the most important in generating burnout: (a) Concern for a promotion, (b) Difficulty in achieving in-class discipline, (c) Isolation from colleagues and peers, (d) Insufficient support for professional problems and (e) Insufficient support for personal problems (Hock, 1988). In their study on teacher burnout and coping behaviors, Seidman and Zager (1991) investigated burnout in teachers and appropriate and inappropriate coping behaviors. The authors determined that teachers with a high level of burnout had developed more inappropriate coping behaviors (smoking, drinking, overeating or not eating, an absence of sleep, etc.). There are important relationships between an individual’s dissatisfaction with their job and psychological disorders. At the same time, they exhibit inappropriate coping behaviors toward these psychological disorders. Therefore, instead of therapeutic interventions conducted as a result of burnout or another disorder,
it is necessary to consider pre-disorder precautions, or preventive medicine. Most importantly, it is necessary to know the values within a given profession for specific tasks that individuals must successfully perform. Individuals, when choosing a profession should consider whether they are able to satisfy the values of this chosen profession, so they can make conscious decisions to obtain satisfaction and happiness.

Whether teachers love their profession greatly depends on which professional values they consider important. Professionally satisfied teachers love their professions, whereas dissatisfied teachers do not. Satisfied teachers’ burnout levels decrease, whereas dissatisfied teachers’ burnout levels increase. For this reason, it is important to know beforehand which professions satisfy which values. It is important that people who are considering teaching are aware of profession’s professional values. With this information, an individual will choose the teaching profession if it satisfies the values they have, but if it does, they will choose another profession. Those values which are satisfied by the teaching profession have been determined using the burnout variable. Therefore, whether an individual’s professional values are satisfied is closely related to the level of burnout.

In this context, the basic problem of this study is to examine the burnout levels of teachers working in the Erzurum’s city center who have different professional sources of satisfaction. To determine the burnout levels of these teachers, answers to the following questions were sought related to the sub-dimensions of burnout.

(i) Do professional sources of satisfaction predict emotional exhaustion in teachers?
(ii) Do professional sources of satisfaction predict personal accomplishment in teachers?
(iii) Do professional sources of satisfaction predict depersonalization in teachers?

Method

Sample

The study population is 698 classroom teachers working at elementary schools in the provincial center of Erzurum, with the study performed on a sample group of 478 individuals selected randomly. The different teacher burnout levels were divided into ten groups based on the professional sources of satisfaction determined using the Professional Satisfaction Inventory. To calculate the required 95% sample size reliability, the formula recommended by Özdamar (1999) was used. The age range in the sample was from 37 to 53 with the mean age being 45±3.21. The teachers’ genders were not considered in the study.

Data Collection Tools

Two tools were used in this study: the Professional Satisfaction Inventory and the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Professional Satisfaction Inventory (PSI): Dimensions that provide satisfaction for the requirements of a profession and the needs of an individual are called professional satisfaction. The Professional Satisfaction Inventory prepared by Savaş (1984) is an inventory which has 45 obligatory-choice questions. The subject is required to match ten statements which relate to the ten professional sources of satisfaction with other statements. Because the inventory is based on the professional sources of satisfaction for each participant, validity and reliability cannot be assessed (Savaş, 1984). The inventory was distributed to the teachers and subsequently collected. Thurstone’s dual comparison method was considered in the evaluation of the data. This method enables us to list the sources of satisfaction and compare the preferences for each professional source of satisfaction and at the same time determine the relative distances between the professional sources of satisfaction. The ten professional sources of satisfaction (professional values) considered the independent variables in this study are the same as those specified by Super (1957) and Hoppock (1967). Each of the ten professional sources of satisfaction in the inventory was individually compared to the other sources of satisfaction in an obligatory-choice manner and then the preferences were ranked. By examining the answers from the 45 questions in the inventory, the frequency of teacher preferences for any source of satisfaction and most preferred source were determined. Subsequently, the number of teachers that preferred a professional source of satisfaction was determined, and the aforementioned groups were formed.

The research group was separated into ten sub-groups according to their professional sources of satisfaction:

1st group: Sixty-four teachers chose “the profession is suitable to my abilities” as their primary source of satisfaction,
2nd group: Thirty-five teachers chose “the profession is suitable to my interests”

3rd group: Eighty-three teachers chose “having social meaning” as their primary source of satisfaction,

4th group: Ninety teachers chose “it’s generating the possibility of helping individuals” as their primary source of satisfaction,

5th group: Thirty-three teachers chose “it’s generating the possibility to earn a lot of money” as their primary source of satisfaction,

6th group: Thirty-one teachers chose “it’s generating the possibility of working independently” as their primary source of satisfaction,

7th group: Forty-one teachers chose “comfortable working conditions and the workplace is clean and safe” as their primary source of satisfaction,

8th group: Thirty teachers chose “the profession has social honor” as their primary source of satisfaction,

9th group: Thirty-one teachers chose “having a high possibility of obtaining a job” as their primary source of satisfaction,

10th group: Forty teachers chose “making a name and making one’s name heard” as their primary source of satisfaction.

Table 1
Reliability of the Subscales of the MBI

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<th>Depersonalization</th>
<th>Personal Accomplishment</th>
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<tr>
<td>This study</td>
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Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI): Developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), the Maslach Burnout Inventory was adapted into Turkish by Çam (1992) and Ergin (1992), and its validity and reliability was assessed. Validity and reliability studies for the MBI were conducted by Sucuoğlu and Kuloğlu (1996) with a group of teachers. The Cronbach’s alpha values for the subscales obtained from different research papers are shown in Table 1. This inventory, which has Likert type questions, has three sub-dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The sub-scale scores for each item include 0: never to 4: always. Higher scores obtained from the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions and lower scores obtained from personal accomplishment indicate burnout.

Procedure

Permission for teacher participation was given by the Erzurum Provincial Directorate for National Education, and the related headmasters, with the teachers voluntarily participating in the research. Completion of the scales was anonymous and confidentiality was strictly guaranteed. The scales were administered to the teachers in groups at their respective schools. Prior to the administration of the scales, all participants were told the aim of the study. The Professional Satisfaction Inventory was initially applied to determine the professional source of satisfaction for each teacher. Subsequently, the same research group completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory, from which the teacher burnout levels were determined. The research group was then divided into ten groups according to sources of satisfaction. In order to examine which of the professional satisfaction sources predicted emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization, multiple regressions were conducted. Since the groups’ professional satisfaction sources were dichotomous, they were dummy coded as 1 (having current professional satisfaction source) and 0 (not having current professional satisfaction source). These analyses were carried out using SPSS 11.5.

Results

The Results Related to the 1st Question

Multiple regression analyses were applied to determine the predictive roles of the different professional satisfaction sources for emotional exhaustion. Before applying the regression analysis, the multiple regression assumptions were checked. The data were examined for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated a normality for test score distributions for all the tests in the current study. Outliers are cases that have data values very different from the data values for the majority of cases in the data set. Outliers were investigated using the Mahalanobis distance. A case is outlier...
if the probability associated with its D² is .001 or less. Multicollinearity was checked using variance inflation factors (VIF). All VIF values were less than 10, which indicated that there was no multicollinearity (Bayram, 2009) and the necessary conditions were achieved. Multiple regression analyses were performed to determine which dependent variable indicated emotional exhaustion, with the independent variables being the professional sources of satisfaction sub-groups. As many of these predictor variables were dependent on each other, a stepwise step procedure was used, which included one new explanatory variable at each step, specifically, the one which was most associated with the dependent variable while being, at the same time, independent of the explanatory variables already included in the model (Carchini, Bella, Solimini, & Bazzanti, 2007). The criteria for the inclusion of these variables from the regression model were: a criterion probability-of-F-to enter. The multiple regression results are shown in Table 2.

From Table 2, it can be seen from the multiple regression result that the 5th group, 4th group, 8th group, 2nd group, 7th group, 1st group, 3rd group, and 10th group all predicted emotional exhaustion and accounted for 58.4% of the variance (R²=.584, adjusted R²=.567, p<.05). The standardized beta coefficients indicate the relative influence of the variables with the 5th group (β=.33, p<.05), 8th group (β=.28, p<.05), 2nd group (β=.21, p<.05), 7th group (β=.20, p<.05), 4th group (β=.16, p<.05), 1st group (β=.14, p<.05), 10th group (β=.13, p<.05), and 3rd group (β=.12, p<.05) all significantly influencing emotional exhaustion, with the 5th group being the strongest predictor.

The Results Related to the 2nd Question

As part of the multiple regression analyses, we examined whether the data met the required conditions, and observed whether they fulfilled the necessary conditions. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine which of the professional satiety sources predicted personal accomplishment, the results of which are in Table 3. From Table 3, it can be seen that the multiple regression highlighted the 5th group, 4th group, 9th group, 3rd group, 8th group, 7th group, 2nd group, and 1st group as predictors of personal accomplishment, which accounted for 64.3% of the variance (R²=.643, adjusted R²=.627, p<.05). The standardized beta coefficients indicated the relative influence of the variables with the 5th group (β=.30, p<.05), 4th group (β=.24, p<.05), 9th group (β=.30, p<.05), 3rd group (β=.22, p<.05), 8th group (β=.22, p<.05), 7th group (β=.13, p<.05), 2nd group (β=.15, p<.05), and 1st group (β=.11, p<.05) all significantly influencing personal accomplishment, with the 5th group being the strongest predictor.

The Results Related to the 3rd Question

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine which of the professional satiety sources predicted depersonalization, the results for which are in Table 4. From Table 4, it can be seen that the 5th group, 1st group, 7th group, 2nd group, 3rd group, 4th group, and 10th group were predictors of depersonalization and accounted for 55.6% of the variance (R²=.556, adjusted R²=.54, p<.05). The standardized beta coefficients indicated the relative influence of the variables with the 5th group (β=.36, p<.05), 1st group (β=.28, p<.05), 7th group (β=.25, p<.05), 2nd group (β=.17, p<.05), 3rd group (β=.21, p<.05), 4th group (β=.15, p<.05), and 10th group (β=.13, p<.05) all significantly influencing depersonalization, with the 5th group being the strongest predictor.

### Table 2

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p<.05

### Table 3

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p<.05

### Table 4

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p<.05
The teachers in the research group were administered the Professional Value Inventory, after which ten groups were subsequently created to predict the burnout levels of teachers who had different professional sources of satisfaction. The results demonstrated that the professional values of the group with the highest burnout level remained unsatisfied with the teaching profession, whereas the professional values of the group with the lowest burnout level was satisfied with the teaching profession.

Discussion

The teaching profession was found to satisfy: “making a name for oneself and making one's name heard,” “suitability of the profession to my interests,” “it's generating the possibility to help individuals,” “having social security,” and “suitability of the profession to my abilities.” Çam (1992) specified the factors that affect burnout as age, length of service, working environment, support from patients, satisfaction from the working environment, work productivity and professional development opportunities. Wolpin (1991) conducted a study to determine the relationship between educators’ and school administrators’ job satisfaction and psychological burnout levels and showed that workplace characteristics had an effect on psychological burnout (as cited in Çitak, 1998). Sarros and Sarros (1987) indicated that job satisfaction and concern for work, job satisfaction and status and being known and jobs changes were the most important predictors of burnout for the “emotional exhaustion” dimension. When people feel exhausted, they adopt a disinterested, distant, depersonalized attitude toward their work and the people they encounter through work (Tümkaya, 2005).

When the results related to personal accomplishment are examined, three professional values are found to be unsatisfied in the teaching profession: “Having a high possibility of obtaining a job,” “the possibility to earn a lot of money,” and “social honor of the profession.” However, the personal accomplishment professional values which were satisfied by the teaching profession in order of satisfaction were: “It's generating the possibility to help individuals,” “having social security,” “working conditions,” “suitability of the profession to my interests,” and “suitability of the profession to my abilities.” The personal accomplishment levels for the 5th group, whose satisfaction source was “the profession is generating the possibility to earn a lot of money,” were much lower than those of the other groups. Sarros and Sarros (1987) found that job satisfaction and status and recognition, job changes, job satisfaction and promotion, job satisfaction and security, job satisfaction and salary and authorizations were the most important predictors of burnout for the dimension of “personal accomplishment.” It is possible that teachers whose satisfaction source is “I work as much as I'm paid” are unable to obtain satisfaction from the teaching profession. Moreover, when self-esteem, a critical factor in the predisposition of teachers to burnout, is included as a personality variable (Türker, 2007), salary becomes a burnout factor. Thus a lower salary contributes to self-esteem and can be accompanied by a growing sense of inadequacy. Therefore, teachers can lose confidence in their ability to make a difference professionally (Karakelle & Canpolat, 2008).

The teaching profession can be seen as a profession which satisfies internal values, such as helping others, and satisfying abilities and interests. This may be the reason why the personal accomplishment level of the 9th group's score was lower compared to the groups with internal sources of satisfaction. Similar to other professions in Turkey, recently the limitations on the level of permanent teaching staff positions provided can result in a gradual lowering of the possibility of obtaining a job. Therefore, a growing dissatisfaction can be seen in those individuals with “having a high possibility of obtaining a job” value. Further, it has been observed that many teacher candidates in education programs often discuss their fear of unemployment.

When the results related to the depersonalization dimension of burnout are examined, it was observed that the first of the sources of satisfaction in the teaching profession leading to depersonalization
The possibility to earn a lot of money, and the second value is "working conditions." Another conclusion from the results related to deprofessionalization is that "making a name for oneself" and "making one's name heard," "a suitability to my interests," "having social security," "it's generating the possibility to help individuals," and "suitability of the profession to my abilities" were all satisfied by the teaching profession and prevented teachers from feelings of deprofessionalization. Therefore, the 5th and 7th groups' scores were different from the other groups because the professional values of these two groups are unable to be sufficiently satisfied by the teaching profession. The value for the 5th group is "earning a lot of money," and that of the 7th group is "comfortable working conditions and the workplace is clean and safe." Currently, because teachers in Turkey have a low-income level and many schools have poor, unclean, unsafe or uncomfortable working conditions, they cannot feel satisfaction. In a study related to stress in elementary school teachers conducted by Raschke, Dedrick, Strathe, and Hawkes (1985), opinions from a mailed questionnaire were examined for each subject's education area, work stress and job satisfaction. The research highlighted issues related to educational understanding with a major finding being that the interest shown by the public in education within the last 15 years had provided teachers with the most support. The teachers listed the following as sources of stress: the obligation to complete a task on time, spoiling students, extra-curricular tasks, unregistered students, interest in talented students, financial restraints, absence of family or social support, absence of positive feedback from administrators, insufficient administrative decisions or course programs, refusal of educational superiority and absence of support from colleagues (Raschke et al., 1985). Additional burnout factors may include crowded classrooms, insufficient resources, discipline problems, lack of upward movement, lack of motivation, and student behavioral problems (Akbas, 2012; Türker, 2007). However, financial restraints also had an important place in teachers' sources of stress. This study's results were supported by Raschke et al.'s (2005) and Sarros and Sarros's (1987) findings. Teachers who had the values of "earning a lot of money" and "comfortable working conditions and the workplace is clean and safe" might become more depersonalized over time compared to other teachers as a result of dissatisfaction with these two professional values. Furthermore, Sarros and Sarros found that the most important predictors of burnout were job changes, job satisfaction and status and being known for "being depersonalized.

In general, in all three dimensions of burnout, the professional value of "the profession is generating the possibility to earn a lot of money" remains unsatisfied. Therefore, Raschke et al. (1985) stated that financial pressures are a main source of stress in the teaching profession. Sarros and Sarros (1987) stated that job satisfaction and salary were among the most important predictors of burnout. The professional sources of satisfaction which lead to increased burnout levels because of dissatisfaction in the teaching profession are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.

In Figure 1, the following professional sources of satisfaction are listed together with their group numbers according to the degree of satisfaction, beginning with the least satisfied:

- **Emotional Exhaustion**
  - 5th group: It's generating the possibility to earn a lot of money
  - 7th group: Working conditions
  - 8th group: Social honor of the profession
  - 9th group: Possibility of obtaining a job

The most important conclusion from Figure 1 is that if individuals whose satisfaction source is "earning a lot of money" choose the teaching profession, they will remain dissatisfied and their burnout levels will increase. The following professional sources of satisfaction met by the teaching profession beginning with the most satisfied were: "the profession is providing social security," "the profession is suitable to my abilities." This result is shown in Figure 2.
In Figure 2, the professional sources of satisfaction with the group numbers are listed, beginning with the most satisfied:

4th group; It's generating the possibility to provide individuals with help
2nd group; Suitability of the profession to my interests
3rd group; Having social security
1st group; Suitability of the profession to my abilities
10th group; Making a name for oneself and making one's name heard
7th group; Working conditions

When Figure 2 is considered, individuals whose professional values are “it’s generating the possibility of providing individuals with help,” “suitability of the profession to my abilities,” “profession is providing social security,” and “suitability of the profession to my interests” obtain satisfaction from the teaching profession. However, for these individuals to make such appropriate decisions, they need to understand their own professional values and sources of satisfaction as only in this way are they able to match their own values with those that offer satisfaction in the teaching profession. The fact that discrepancies between a teacher’s source of satisfaction, including the opportunity to provide individuals with help and outcomes (lack of reciprocity) in human service professions at both interpersonal and organizational levels are related to higher burnout levels (Yıldız, 2012), demonstrates why interactions with other people are often thought to be central concepts in burnout.

In this study, the sources of satisfaction met by the teaching profession in Turkey were minimally examined. For example, the teaching profession was basically found to satisfy the “helping” source of satisfaction but not found to satisfy the “money” source of satisfaction. Values that other professions satisfy can be determined using similar basic studies. In this manner, at least in terms of values, individuals choosing professions can protect themselves from making accidental decisions.

In this study, an attempt was made to determine professional sources of satisfaction. Determining professional sources of satisfaction using only one variable might have limited our study. For this reason, if similar studies are to be conducted, these limitations could be removed by using more than one variable. Professions differ in that they require different abilities, interests and other personal qualities. Although the qualities required by professions throughout the world have some similarities, there are also differences between countries. From these research results, the teaching profession in Turkey falls short of satisfying the value of “earning a lot of money”. However, in another country, this value may be well satisfied. In this respect, the social dimension should not be undervalued when conducting studies on the required qualities of professions.

In conclusion, measures should be considered to prevent individuals from burning out. One of these measures is to guide individuals professionally when choosing their future professions. “However, in Turkey, since choosing a profession is done by chance, burnout in the professions becomes inevitable” (Akbaba, 2004).
References


Akbaba / A Comparison of the Burnout Levels of Teachers with Different Occupational Satisfaction Sources


