THE EFFECT OF THE SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: CASE STUDY OF A UNIVERSITY

Cem GÜÇEL
Turkish Armed Forces
Ph.D.
cemgucel@hotmail.com

Suat BEGEÇ
Turkish Armed Forces
Ph.D.
suatbegec@hotmail.com

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behaviors. For this aim, firstly, the servant leadership, then organizational citizenship behaviors are explained. In the application part, a questionnaire including the measures of the servant leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors is distributed to employees of one of the leading private universities in Turkey and the data were assessed by statistical analysis methods. Finally, it is found that there is a positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Key Words: Leadership*1*,Servant leadership *2,* organizational citizenship behaviors 3.

Jel Code   : M20

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st Century business environment, companies have found it necessary to transform from a business that simply earns a profit to a business that looks for ways to maintain a competitive advantage. Leaders are now not only tasked with strategizing to come up with profit-earning activities, but leaders are also tasked with strategizing to motivate and engage employees to give more back to the organization in order to achieve desired results. Leadership is specifically identified as a key element of service firm success due to the importance of cooperation, learning, and customer relations in this environment. The subject of

leadership is complex, and one of the main issues facing organizational leaders today is how to motivate employees to actively participate in the efforts that lead to accomplishing organizational goals. The study primarily aims to establish a relationship between servant leadership behavior and organizational citizenship behaviors. The servant leader is constantly trying to find out what his or her people need to be, successful. This study is also carried out to determine if antecedents of servant leadership are related to the extent of organizational citizenship behaviors across the organization. Organizational citizenship behaviors is taken as dependent variable because it is likely to depend upon the style of leadership - servant leadership.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
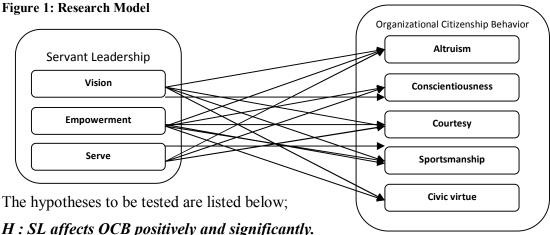
2.1. Servant leadership (SL)

Robert Greenleaf (1999:1) argued that the terms of "servant" and "leader" could be fused into one person, affecting productivity in real world situations. A servant leader is a facilitator for followers to achieve a shared vision Greenleaf (1997:7), Spears (1998:1-15, Spears (2004:9), Laub (1999:23). Greenleaf (1970:6) who first presented the term in an essay, entitled "The Servant as Leader" and stated that "(it) begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (Greenleaf, 1970:7). Among the numerous other leadership frameworks presented in the management literature, one that articulates the emotional, relational, and moral dimensions of leadership in a particularly useful way is the concept of SL, introduced four decades ago by Greenleaf (1970:8) and currently attracting renewed interest among scholars and managers alike (Avolio et al., 2009:424). One of the primary goals of the servant leader is to develop future servant leaders (Ehrhart, 2004:61). Servant-leaders seek to transform their followers to "…grow healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants"(Greenleaf,1991:27). Thus the servant leader builds up leadership in a community through a "follower-oriented theory of leadership" (Irving, and Longbotham, 2007:808).

2.2. Organizational citizenship behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was defined by Dennis Organ originally as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988:4). In spite of the new definition, "individual behavior that supports the social and psychological context

of task performance" (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994:656, Organ, 1997:95), a majority of academicians still measure OCB construct via such typology of behavioral components as *altruism* (helping out coworkers), *conscientiousness* (doing an exceptional job in one's role), *courtesy* (being kind to coworkers), *sportsmanship* (does not consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters), and *civic virtue* (staying up on company policies) (Organ, 1988:9, Organ et al., 2006:32).

The research model designed is seen in Fig 1.

Figure 1: Research Model

The hypotheses to be tested are listed below;

H : SL affects OCB positively and significantly.

H₁ : SL affects altruism positively and significantly

H_{1a}: *Vision affects altruism positively and significantly,*

H_{1b}: *Empowerment affects altruism positively and significantly,*

H_{1c}: *Serve affects altruism positively and significantly,*

H₂ : SL affects conscientiousness positively and significantly

H_{2a}: *Vision affects conscientiousness positively and significantly,*

H_{2b}: *Empowerment affects conscientiousness positively and significantly,*

H_{2c}: *Serve affects conscientiousness positively and significantly,*

H₃ : SL affects courtesy positively and significantly.

H_{3a}: *Vision affects courtesy positively and significantly,*

H_{3b}: *Empowerment affects courtesy positively and significantly,*

H_{3c}: *Serve affects courtesy positively and significantly,*

H₄ : SL affects sportsmanship positively and significantly.

H₄ₐ: Vision affects sportsmanship positively and significantly,

H₄ᵦ: Empowerment affects sportsmanship positively and significantly,

H₄ᵨ: Serve affects sportsmanship positively and significantly,

H₅ : SL affects civic virtue positively and significantly.

H₅ₐ: Vision affects civic virtue positively and significantly,

H₅ᵦ: Empowerment affects civic virtue positively and significantly,

H₅ᵨ: Serve affects civic virtue positively and significantly,

3. METHOD

3.1. Sampling

The samples of the study were 178 administrative and faculty staff at a university in İstanbul. The online questionnaire designed for data collection was sent to 178 participants via e-mail and 67 participants responded by filling it out. The remaining 67 responses were evaluated. A brief look at the demographic figures of the participants reveals that 46% (N=31) of the respondents were female and 54% (N=36) were male. It was observed that 25% (N=17) were either 40 years old or younger; 6% (N=4) had undergraduate degrees, 6% (N=4) had graduate degrees; 36% (N=24) had MA/MS and 52% (N=35) had Ph.D. degrees. A survey of academic status of the respondents shows that 93% were faculty staff [N=62 (6 Professors, 7 Associated Professors, 18 Assistant Professors, 31 Lecturers)], and over 7% (N=5) were administrative staff.

3.2. Research Scales

3.2.1.Servant Leadership Scale (ESLS): This scale was designed to measure the SL perceived by workers and, was developed by Dennis and Winston (2003) and translated to Turkish by Aslan and Özata (2011). This scale was consists of 14 phrases which were 7 phrases "empowerment" , 4 phrases "serve", 3 phrases "vision". The 5 Likert-type scale used in the study consisted of options ranging from "Never=1" to "Always=5".

3.2.2.Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale (OCBS):

Developed by Basım and Şeşen in another study, the scale employed in the study to measure the OCB of employees was created by Vey and Campbell (2004) and Williams and Shiaw (1999). The scale used in the study was seen to yield five

factors: "Altruism (5 phrases)", "Conscientiousness (3 phrases)", "Courtesy (3 phrases)", "Sportsmanship (4 phrases)" and "Civil Virtue (4 phrases)" (a total of 19 phrases). While using ESLS and OCBS the participants were asked to rate the items to show how much they agreed on the phrases used, based on their perceptions of the companies they worked for. The 6 Likert-type scale used in the study consisted of options ranging from "Never=1" to "Always=5".

An explanatory factor analysis was made to determine the structural validity and cronbach alpha values were investigated to assess the reliability of ESLS and OCBS. The factor analysis placed ESL under three factors while it placed OCB under fiveseparate factors. After the factor analysis, the resulting factors and factor loads along with cornbach alpha coefficients are exhibited in Table 1. It can be said that these findings and the scales used are valid and reliable.

Tablo.1 Factors Obtained and Factor Loads

Scale	Factors	Factor Loads	Cronbach alpha
ESLS	Vision	0,426-0,821	0,84
	Empowerment	0,478-0,772	0,86
	Serve	0,395-0,869	0,89
OCBS	Altruism	0,392-0,889	0,91
	Conscientiousness	0,523-0,836	0,89
	Courtesy Sportsmanship	0,507-0,863	0,90
	Civil Virtue	0,476-0,712	0,87
		0,356-0,685	0,86

4. FINDINGS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTS

As seen in Table 2, the findings from regression analyses conducted to test the hypotheses prove these hypotheses statistically.

According to these results, the three of two dimensions of servant leadership vision and serve affect civic virtue and the gentleman's dimensions of the OCB positively and significantly. The dimension of empowerment affect the only civil virtue negatively. In this context, only H4a, H4c, H5a, H5c the hypotheses accepted. It was expected that empowerment dimension affects civic virtue positively, but the results obtained negatively that is why H5b hypothesis was also rejected. Servant leadership affects organizational citizenship behavior only sportsmanship and civic virtue dimensions partly can be expressed.

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analyses

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	β	t	R	R2	Adj. R^2	F	p	Hyp.	Result
Vision	Altruism	0,261	1,612	0,225	0,051	0,05	1,119	0,348	H_{1a}	**Reject**
Empowerment		-0,373	-1,453						H_{1b}	**Reject**
Serve		0,195	1,230						H_{1c}	**Reject**
Vision	Conscien	0,490	1,421	0,294	0,087	0,043	1,993	0,124	H_{2a}	**Reject**
Empowerment	tiousness	-0,190	-0,105						H_{2b}	**Reject**
Serve		0,107	0,932						H_{2c}	**Reject**
Vision	Courtesy	0,106	1,045	0,157	0,025	0,022	0,533	0,661	H_{3a}	**Reject**
Empowerment		-0,198	-1,230						H_{3b}	**Reject**
Serve		0,106	1,069						H_{3c}	**Reject**
Vision	Sportsman ship	0,353	**2,371**[**]	0,609	0,371	0,342	12,410	0,000	H_{4a}	**Yes**
Empowerment		-0,034	-0,142						H_{4b}	**Reject**
Serve		0,589	**3,832**[**]						H_{4c}	**Yes**
Vision	Civil Virtue	0,537	**4,376**[**]	0,504	0,254	0,218	7,142	0,000	H_{5a}	**Yes**
Empowerment		-0,638	**-3,383**[**]						H_{5b}	**Reject**
Serve		0,267	**2,224**[**]						H_{5c}	**Yes**

* $p < 0,05$, ** $p < 0,01$

5. CONCLUSION

According to the study of the results achieved; vision and serve dimensions of the servant leadership affect the sportsmanship and civic virtue dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior *positively and significantly*, and empowerment dimension affect the only civil virtue negatively at the beginning of the study.

Leadership has an important affect on the individual and group's behavior in the organization. SL is one important approach of leadership which is based on value

oriented leadership. A healthy organization is the one in which the characteristics of SL is shown through the organizational culture. After Greenleaf, the studies done during 1990 to 2003 in SL had focused on the specific issues which could help putting SL into action. Buchen (1998:125) states that self-identity, the capacity of reciprocity, making relationship and dealing with future as important issues for SL model. Farling et al. (1999:52) state vision, influence, credibility, trust, and service as the themes of SL. Laub (1999:52) introduced the following factors: valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership. The findings show that there is a significant relationship among the characteristics of SL and OC. As what testing the hypothesis show, the findings of the present study about the presence of relationship among the characteristics of SL and staff OC are in line with the findings of Barbuto and Wheeler (2006:302), Ehrhart (2004:67).

Nonetheless, it is apparent that leaders' ethical behavior and the prioritization of followers' concerns have been emphasized as the main characteristics of servant-leadership in various studies (Ehrhart, 2004:69, Liden, et al., 2008:161). In addition, trust plays a critical role in improving the quality of the relationship between a servant leader and a follower(s) as it helps the subordinate(s) perceiving the leader's behaviors and decisions to be thoughtful, dependable, and modal (Liden, et al., 2008:166).

When employees perceive that leaders are fair and when leader behaviors are attributed to the leader's benevolent intentions, employees tend to infer that leaders are committed to them and high-quality exchanges result. However, it is argued that cultural norms and shared values and practices affect leaders' behavior. Founders and original members of organizations are immersed in their own culture. Consequently, their leader behavior and management practices are likely to reflect behavior patterns favored in that culture. Subordinates of the original founder of an organization and subsequent leaders also use management practices that reflect the values shared by members of the culture. For example, founders and subsequent leaders establish selection criteria for hiring and promotions, serve as role models by setting personal examples, and socialize organizational members in a manner that reflects the broader culture in which they function. Further, dominant cultural norms induce global leader behavior patterns and organizational practices that are expected and viewed as legitimate. Given that organizations as well as societies are characterized by different cultures, the types of leader behaviors that create liking and trust may differ across organizations.

Leaders can try to shape the work environment to provide greater opportunities for OCB. Indeed, it would be hard for an employee to exhibit self-sacrifice if that employee had little contact with coworkers (and therefore no opportunities to observe their need for help) or if the work rules were so inflexible that the employee was prevented from helping coworkers. Similarly, employees would find it difficult to responsibly participate in the governance of the organization or to offer constructive suggestions if there were no staff meetings or other forums for doing so. Leaders can potentially enhance OCB by changing the structure of the tasks employees perform, the conditions under which they do their work, and/or human resource practices that govern their behavior. Thus, leaders need to understand which characteristics of their behaviors tend to be more strongly related to OCB in different contexts.

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