

DISCRIMINATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOME TYPES OF LEADERSHIP

Ayrımcılık ve Onun Bazı Liderlik Türleriyle İlişkisi

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ABSTRACT

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In this study, discrimination in organizations and its relationship with some types of leadership were investigated. In this context, the studies in the literature were examined and articles that studied the issue of discrimination with some types of leadership were discussed. As a result, it was noticed that the results in the mentioned studies were quite similar. According to the findings of field research, discrimination in organizations; it does not differ according to variables such as culture, company size, gender, belief and education. In other words, it is possible to see discrimination and its destructive effects in almost every organization (regardless of whether it is small or large or located in Asia, Europe or America). For this reason, it is extremely important to prevent discriminatory behaviour in organizations in a timely manner before it becomes widespread. If it is not possible to do this, discrimination can spread throughout organizations like a cancer, and as a result, organizations may face dangerous consequences such as entropy. Researchers have defined the most competent people responsible for preventing discrimination in organizations as leaders. As a summary of the mentioned studies, a negative and significant relationship was found between servant, ethical, paternalistic and positive leadership types and the ability of these leaders to stop or reduce discrimination and discrimination. Since this study was prepared as a compilation of independent field research, no comparison was made between the mentioned leadership types and the research results were interpreted independently of each other.

ÖZ

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Bu çalışmada, örgütlerde ayrımcılık ve onun bazı liderlik türleri ile ilişkisi araştırılmıştır. Bu kapsamda yazında yer alan çalışmalar incelenmiş ve bazı liderlik türleriyle ayrımcılık konusunun çalışıldığı makaleler ele alınmıştır. Sonuçta, bahsi geçen çalışmalardaki sonuçların oldukça benzer olduğu fark edilmiştir. Saha araştırmalarının bulgularına göre örgütlerdeki ayrımcılık; kültür, şirket büyüklüğü, cinsiyet, inanç, eğitim gibi değişkenlere göre farklılık göstermemektedir. Başka bir ifadeyle, ayrımcılığı ve onun yıkıcı etkilerini (küçük veya büyük olması veya Asya, Avrupa veya Amerika'da bulunması fark etmeksizin) hemen her örgütte görmek mümkündür. Bu sebeple, örgütlerdeki ayrımcı davranışların yaygınlaşmadan zamanında önlenmesi son derece önemlidir. Bunu yapmak mümkün olmadığı takdirde ayrımcılık, tıpkı bir kanser gibi örgütlerin bütününe yayılabilmekte ve sonuç olarak örgütler entropi gibi tehlikeli sonuçlarla karşı karşıya kalabilmektedir. Araştırmacılar, örgütlerde ayrımcılığın önlenmesinden sorumlu en yetkin kişileri ise liderler olarak tanımlamıştır. Bahsedilen çalışmaların bir özeti olarak; hizmetkâr, etik, babacan ve pozitif liderlik türleri ve bu liderlerin ayrımcılığı durdurma veya azaltma yetenekleriyle ayrımcılık arasında negatif yönlü ve anlamlı bir ilişki tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, bağımsız saha araştırmalarının bir derlemesi olarak hazırlandığından bahsi geçen liderlik türleri arasında herhangi bir karşılaştırma yapılmamış ve araştırma sonuçları birbirlerinden bağımsız olarak yorumlanmıştır.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Discrimination is a concept that has continued from the past to the present and can be easily observed in almost every area of society. In other words, the economic, social, political, cultural, artistic, and organizational traces of discrimination which is as old as human history are extremely common. However, strong efforts have been made to reduce discrimination in organizations, we see discrimination as a prevalent and immoral issue in almost every firm. For instance, most of the leaders who work in Fortune 500 companies are still white men, older workers are often patronized, and disabled employees are excluded by others (Hebl et al., 2020).

When we look at the studies in the literature, we see that discrimination has negative and destructive effects on many variables such as job performance, work dedication, job satisfaction, productivity, intention to leave the job, happiness, creativity, establishing strong relationships with stakeholders, and the desire to take responsibility (Cassidy et al., 2004; Aytemiz & Bolat, 2005; Lim et al., 2008; Leasher & Miller, 2012). Additionally, as a positive development, we see that discriminatory behaviour decreases or is exhibited more softly as time goes by. We know that the significant change in employees' mindsets, expectations, and communication skills plays an important role in this process as well as increasing awareness among people, the development of social sensitivities against bad behaviour over time, and the spread of mass communication tools.

Discrimination is not only morally wrong, but it also causes great economic harm to countries. To give an instance, a study called "Closing the Racial Inequality Gaps" reveals that racism has cost the US economy \$16 trillion over the past 20 years. Considering that the gross domestic product (GDP) of the USA is 21 trillion dollars, the importance of this amount will be better understood (Rahman-Davies, 2022).

Today's global businesses require individuals with very different ethnic origins, languages, ages, religions, appearances, and mentalities to work together in harmony. For this reason, it is necessary to pay massive attention to the issue of discrimination to prevent the problems that discrimination may cause in organizations and to increase organizational efficiency. The solution mechanism of organizational problems is undoubtedly the leaders. Leaders are individuals who set common organizational goals and direct the masses toward these goals. Beyond that, one of the most important duties of leaders is to eliminate organizational problems or to produce effective solutions to them. As a result, the number one addressee of discrimination problems experienced in organizations is essentially the leaders (Saha & Sharma, 2020). The decisions that leaders will make and the exemplary attitudes they will display either lead to an increase in discrimination or eliminate it.

In this study, we tried to unpackage the relevance between discrimination and some leadership styles by contrasting literature reviews. Firstly, we will talk about discrimination and its different types like nepotism, patronage, and favoritism. Following this, we will focus on the archives as servant leadership, ethical leadership, paternalist leadership, and positive leadership (the combination of authentic, respectful, and inclusive leadership styles). Lastly, we will discuss discrimination in organizations, its destructive effects, and what to do to struggle with it.

2. DISCRIMINATION

The term of discrimination whose first use in English coincides with the 17th century, emerges as the privileged treatment of authorized persons towards a person or a group for individual goals. In this case, there is a person or persons who take advantage of discrimination, and there is another party in the opposite who is victimized because of discrimination (Schrötle & Glammeier, 2013).

Beyond these events, discrimination detrimentally effects the concepts of trust and justice in organizations. This means discrimination has many direct and indirect effects. As a result, one side is favorable, while the other, possibly more crowded, is offended and alienated.

Discrimination, which is defined as the privileged treatment of authorized persons against their close circle or a group for reasons such as emotional, spiritual, or kinship (Saylı and Kızıldağ, 2007), is often carried out implicitly because it is rejected by societies. For example, a manager who discriminates in an enterprise often does not openly commit this wrong behaviour, instead, he makes excuses for the right/unjustified negative characteristics of the employee he discriminates. In this respect, discrimination is often difficult to prove, and this shows that more importance should be given to discrimination.

On the other hand, discrimination levels change by type of discrimination. Due to research triggered in 2022 on 35.331 students, 19.4% of participants reported discrimination related to at least one identity in the last 6 months. Moreover, the most common types of discrimination were listed as gender discrimination, race-ethnicity-culture discrimination, and sexual discrimination (PennState Student Affairs, 2023). The figure shown below shows different types of discrimination and their percentages in descending order.

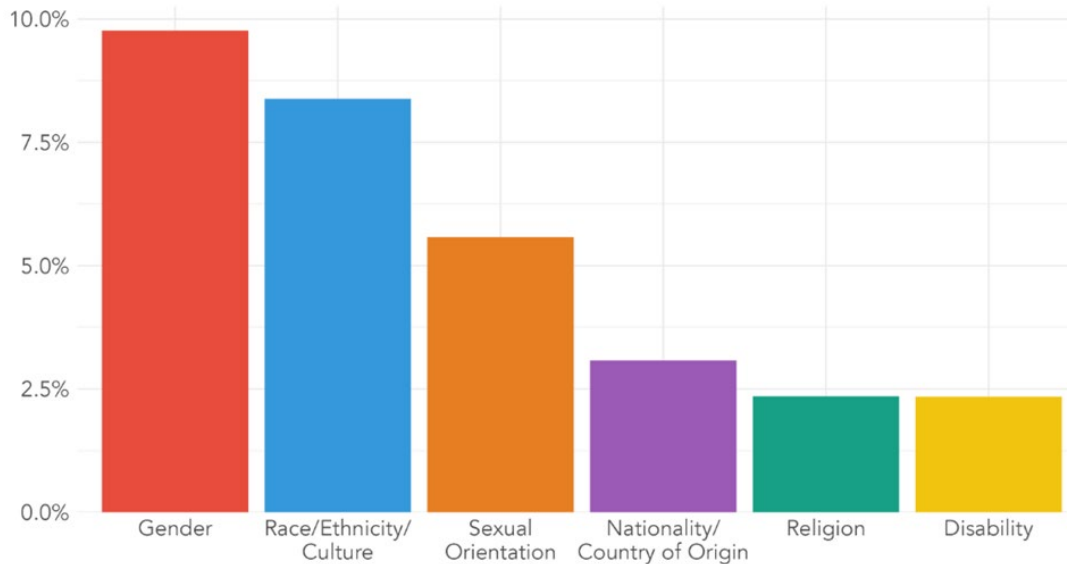


Figure 1. Endorsement of Different Types of Discrimination

Reference: PennState Student Affairs, 2023.

Although there are negative connotations when it comes to discrimination, there is also a positive type of discrimination. This concept is included in the literature as positive discrimination, which means “the favoring of individuals or individuals who are disadvantaged, powerless or in need of guidance by considering human values” or “the inverse strategy of what has been done up to now by the educational system. It means giving unequal treatment to achieve increasingly similar outcomes” (Garcia-Huidobro, 1994). Affirmative discrimination is organized formally or informally in various areas of society, from laws that design societies to unwritten customs and traditions. An important output of positive discrimination is that it does not disturb individuals in

the societies in which it is exhibited. Just like avoiding negative discrimination, leaders also must spread positive discrimination in organizations and set an example for this with their words and behaviours. In this way, the organizational climate will be established in a way that will make all different individuals peaceful (Mindell, 2002).

Another form of discriminatory behaviour that is frequently encountered both in daily life and in business life is nepotism. In this type of discrimination, it is possible to discriminate against others by protecting, observing, and favoring a person or a group. Among the reasons for nepotism are kinship, peer-friend, classmate, colleague, fellow countryman, military fellowship, joining the same sect, and living in the same neighborhood. Discrimination is experienced not only in official organizations but also in informal organizations. The prominent types of discrimination in the literature are as follows (Kılınç, 2023):

- **Nepotism (relative discrimination):** The tendency of a boss or manager to hire, promote, or protect family members over those with merit. Nepotism is quite common in organizations where families have a say. In this way, it is ensured that the family existence within the organization continues for a long time (Jaskiewicz, 2013).
- **Cronyism (acquaintances discrimination):** A type of discrimination shown to former friends and colleagues regardless of their qualifications. It can occur in two ways: instrumental and relational. Instrumental cronyism is more task-related and is closely related to the usefulness of the individual. In relational cronyism; love and loyalty come to the fore and it takes a long time for this to emerge (Khatri, 2016).
- **Partisanship (political favoritism):** Partisanship is an enduring psychological attachment or social identity with a party that is passed on to subsequent individuals, like a religious affiliation, and that an employee tends to maintain throughout his or her life (Lupu, 2015).
- **Patronage (political or religious affiliation):** Refers to the beneficial actions of a dominant boss towards less powerful employees. Here, the boss manages and directs those around him by using his position power. There are four different types of patronage: organizational, democratic, tactical and reform (Bearfield, 2009).
- **Clientelism (nepotism towards power):** Is a different type of patronage system. Here, it is possible for the authority holding the power to request support in return for some services, goods or positions it provides according to its own distribution criteria. As a result of clientelism, disrepute to institutions, social unrest, disruptions, and errors in business and transactions may occur. Moreover, clientelist relations lead to the continuation of many religious, sectarian, racial, sexist, class and ideological oppressions.
- **Favoritism (ingroup discrimination):** Is the transfer of rewards from the entire organization to a group. This type of discrimination has many negative effects on investment and innovation. As a result of favoritism, inefficiencies emerge and intra-organizational conflicts increase. Favoritism is easier to maintain in a small and homogeneous group or when there is heterogeneity between groups (Bramoullé and Goyal, 2016).

3. LEADERSHIP STYLES AND DISCRIMINATION

3.1. Servant Leadership and Discrimination

Servant leadership is a holistic leadership approach that can bring followers together relationally, ethically, emotionally, and spiritually and was first introduced in 1977 in Greenleaf's article called "The Servant as Leader". Servant leadership is a type of leadership that includes all approaches

to leadership but first and foremost to develop followers based on leaders' altruistic and ethical orientations (Greenleaf, 1977).

Servant leadership is a new form of leadership that requires radical changes by empathizing. Servant leaders see themselves as stewards of the organizations, who seek to grow the resources, financial and otherwise, that have been entrusted to them. For this reason, although they focus on the personal development of their followers, they do not ignore their performance expectations. Unlike performance-oriented leadership (Eva et al., 2019). The servant leaders are someone with unusual strength and resources who can put themselves in other people's place, listen to them, and emotionally understand and support them. The servant leaders also establish mutual trusting relationships with other people, think about their future, value other people, contribute to their development, and do not exhibit authoritarian behaviour.

Today, there are many studies on the effects of servant leadership in organizations. One of them is the workplace in which the relationships between servant leaderships and discrimination are deeply investigated. Gotsis and Grimani (2016) drew attention to this point in their study named "The role of servant leadership in fostering inclusive organizations identity groups". Accordingly, servant leaders have an inclusive effect on employees who differ in various aspects. The reason is, that type of leadership empowers individuals and makes them feel valued. The servant leaders also exhibit egalitarian, socially responsible, and humane attitudes and are more sensitive to society's expectations. Servant leaders who promote justice and social protection within the organization reduce operational friction between groups. As a result, being a steward will ensure that people can feel a stronger connection to those around them, thus ultimately fulfilling the need for belongingness. The other study on servant leadership and discrimination is conducted by Pless and Maak (2004). Researchers implicate that, servant leaders play very important roles in establishing an organizational culture that includes diversity among employees. In this way, basic human values and human dignity will be protected and developed. They also put forward a model on this subject, include ethical components, support humanitarian ideals, and consider being respectful towards different individuals a high priority.

3.2. Ethical Leadership and Discrimination

Ethics is known as a sub-discipline of philosophy and is a set of moral principles that guide individual or group behaviour and facilitate the distinction between right and wrong. Types of ethics are discussed under three headings in the literature. These are classified as metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. When the subheadings are examined, many types of ethics can be found, such as deontological ethics, virtue ethics, bioethics, marketing ethics, military ethics, informatics ethics, and managerial ethics (Kırel, 2002). Managerial ethics are the principles or rules of behaviour that must be followed in managerial actions. The spread of behaviours and practices contrary to social values in the field of management leads institutions to develop ethics and ethical codes and make them a part of their culture. Managerial ethics, "compliance in managerial actions".

This kind of ethics is defined as "necessary principles or rules of conduct" (Kılınç and Aydın, 2017) and requires continuity and responsibility. Bhatti and friends (2021) suggested that managerial ethics positively affects business success in the long term. Otherwise, there will be unrest within the organization and all individuals under the same roof will be negatively affected by this. Ethics is based on the philosophical dimension of morality, which includes a universal dimension and is founded on the foundations of truth and honesty. Ethics investigates the right or wrong of conscious human actions and offers a basic framework between good and bad in this direction. Ethics is also a moral teaching and it explores the moral life and its laws, forms, and

principles. In the digital age, a new leadership called ethical leadership has occurred. This leadership style is based on values, beliefs, emotions, and trust rather than bureaucratic and legal authority is needed to influence people. The main source of power and influence of this leadership which is a critical determinant of organizational outcomes in the field of public administration (Moon and Christensen, 2021) is builded on moral and ethical authority. The most important features that a leader should have and reflect on those around him are his ethical values and honesty.

For this purpose, Moon and Christensen (2021) conducted research to demonstrate the relationship between discrimination and ethical leadership. The authors argue that despite growing interest in personnel diversity and ethical leadership very little is known about the effectiveness of ethical leadership in managing diverse public workforces. The results gained from the US Federal Government, racial diversity is negatively related to affective commitment climate and positively related to race-based employment discrimination. These consequences linked to organizational behaviour are crucial for the sustainable competitiveness of the company, and preventing this harmful climate is one of the main tasks of the leader. The other importance of results is ethical leadership beneficially moderates the associations of racial diversity with organizational outcomes. Thus, ethical leadership aids public managers and personnel in avoiding problems in racially diverse public agencies. On the other hand, leaders' morality and ethics (which are among key factors of effectiveness) improve work related attitudes and efforts (Hassan et al., 2014).

3.3. Paternalist Leadership and Discrimination

Leadership studies in the literature generally differ in terms of Western and Eastern cultures. Many of the studies conducted in this context focus on the Western leadership style. We cannot say that the results obtained because of the research are universal. Therefore, applying a leadership model created in the West to an organization operating in the Eastern society may not yield very accurate results. Studies carried out to date show that especially eastern societies exhibit paternalistic leadership characteristics.

Paternalistic leadership is a type of leadership commonly seen in Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American cultures (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006). Paternalistic leadership does not belong to the last century, when many new leadership types were produced, but is a type of leadership that dates to BC and is based on the philosophy of Confucianism in China. This is a kind of leadership. Confucian philosophy frames the leader's role as a father or close friend who truly cares about the well-being of his followers. The follower's role is to reciprocate the leader's attention and support through appreciation and obedience (Bedi, 2020).

The paternalistic leader takes a similar approach to his subordinate as a parent takes care of his child. This situation arises because of the reflection of the cultural characteristics valid in collectivist societies to the organizations. The leader supports the employee in matters related not only to the employee's business life but also to his private life (Luu & Djurkovic, 2019). The leader directs his activities to ensure the welfare of the employee both at work and in his private life. In return for this favor, the employee shows respect and obedience to his superior.

For this purpose, Erden and Otken (2019) conducted a study to determine the relationship between paternalist leadership and discrimination. The findings indicate that benevolent and moral paternalistic leadership is negatively related to perceived discrimination in human resources practices like recruitment, hiring, promotion, assignments, delegation, evaluation, payment, rewards, training, and working conditions. The findings of the study show that when the leader acts authoritatively, employees perceive favoritism, especially in the recruitment process. This is

significant for leadership literature because it focuses on a leadership style that is viewed negatively in Western societies, contrary to Eastern countries like India, Pakistan, China, and Turkey. As a result, the leaders must have more knowledge and important insights about Eastern culture and employees who originated from Eastern lands to manage diversity in large firms. As similarly, Cheng and Wang (2015) assume that paternalistic leaders are generally people who care about their followers and worry on their behalf. The authors suggest that workers view such leaders as a kind of father. Undoubtedly, paternalistic leaders expect similar behaviours from other employees and so discriminatory behaviours within the organization decrease.

3.4. Positive Leadership and Discrimination

One of the most important roles of leaders in the modern world is to minimize discrimination in organizations and to provide an environment in which all employees participate. This is possible by exhibiting positive leadership styles. Positive leadership is not considered as a leadership type on its own, but as a common set of authentic, respectful, and inclusive leadership (Dadanlar & Abebe, 2020). The reason for this is that the three leadership styles mentioned are very closely related to each other.

If we briefly touch on these three types of leadership; authentic leaders are the leaders aware of their strengths and weaknesses. It cannot open the door to some problems in the organization by focusing only on its strengths. At the same time, they see their weaknesses and acts. In this context, they develop their strengths and try to overcome their weaknesses in line with development. Respectful leaders are leaders who respect and therefore value others (Corriveau, 2020). It is very important for these people to notice other people and to know their importance and value. These leaders need to actively confront their current responsibilities. To achieve this, they must be conscious of who or what they really are. Inclusive leaders are leaders who respect their subordinates and evaluate them accurately and impartially. This requires being consciously aware of the existence of the other person in their environment, recognizing the role appropriately, understanding the context of the situation correctly, and maintaining healthy mutual relations. These leaders create opportunities for dialogue about and across differences, demonstrate an interest in learning and be authentic about their own challenges (Shore et al., 2018) and do not discriminate among their followers based on individual characteristics such as gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other factors. Inclusive leaders only focus on, value, and try to make the most efficient use of the unique talents and different perspectives that individuals bring to the workplace.

As a result, discrimination impedes the full integration of individuals from stigmatized social groups at work as the opposite of inclusion. The study “Positive Leadership: Relationships with Employee Inclusion, Discrimination, and Well-Being” conducted by Adams et al. (2020) clarifies this point. According to the authors' wide-participation study covering many countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, it was seen that the psychological levels were higher in organizations with positive leadership styles. This is especially important for leaders who understand the importance of teamwork. It will be extremely beneficial to exhibit these leadership styles to prevent occupations in organizations and increase team diversity. The study also found a positive relationship between positive leadership and both inclusion and discrimination. In addition, it has been found to have a stronger effect on the well-being of workers compared to inclusion discrimination. That means positive leadership approaches have larger impacts than others. Moreover, employees who see a positive and respectful approach from their leaders tend to see themselves as valuable and meaningful. As a consequence, the positive behaviours exhibited by the leader, the employees increasingly feel like a respected group members. As a reflection of these behaviours, which are based on mutual respect and tolerance and spread throughout the

organization, discriminatory behaviours are gradually disappearing ((Decker & Van Quaquebeke, 2015).

4. DISCUSSION

Discrimination is a phenomenon that dates to ancient times and is still valid today. Discrimination has devastating effects on both individuals and societies. Discrimination is frequently encountered in organizations, and this situation causes organizations to move away from their future goals. In this study, we examined the issue of discrimination and its relationship with some types of leadership like servant, ethical, paternalist, and positive leadership.

Discrimination in organizations appears in not one but many different forms. The most prominent of these are nepotism, cronyism, partisanship, patronage, clientelism, favoritism, and labor-intensive discrimination. Each of these types of discrimination has different characteristics, but their common point is that while protecting the interests of a particular person or group, they often do not consider the interests of other groups, which are more numerous, and ultimately oppose them.

To solve this phenomenon, there are many methods to combat discrimination in organizations. These methods are determined by the decisions of the company owners, organizational culture, shared common values, and, of course, leaders. Due to the subject of this study, the possible effects of different leadership types on the problem of discrimination were investigated and relevant articles in the literature were compiled.

In line with the findings, it has been observed that servant leadership has great effects on employees with different perspectives. The reason for this is that employees in organizations with servant leaders feel valued and thus become stronger. Servant leaders also successfully establish justice and provide social protection to individuals. If we look at ethical leaders, this type of leadership also has a significant impact on reducing discrimination. Widespread racism in the USA (as well as most countries) destroys the climate of commitment in organizations and strengthens racist employment policies, according to findings from a national government. The role of ethical leaders in this process is to reduce racist approaches and focus on organizational outcomes. This occurs when ethical leaders influence individuals and community managers and help them prevent discrimination. The other type of leadership discussed in the study was paternalistic leadership. Paternalistic leadership differs from most other types of leadership in one respect. The reason for this is that while this type of leadership has negative connotations in Western societies, it has the opposite feature in Eastern societies and is therefore quite common. According to the findings from studies on paternalistic leadership and discrimination, paternalistic leadership is negatively related to perceived discrimination in human resources practices like recruitment, hiring, promotion, assignments, delegation, evaluation, payment, rewards, training, and working conditions. If these leaders work in international organizations, they should pay attention to whether their employees adopt Eastern or Western social cultures. The fourth and last leadership type of the study is positive leadership, expressed in some studies as a mixture of authentic, respectful, and inclusive leaders. Empirical research has shown that authentic leaders empower employees by discovering both their strengths and weaknesses and reducing discrimination. Respectful leaders, on the other hand, try to reduce the negative impact of discrimination by valuing others and discovering who they are at their core. Inclusive leaders are leaders who respect their subordinates and can develop them quickly. These leaders never discriminate between their employees based on their characteristics such as age, gender, belief, physical appearance, and ethnicity. Inclusive leaders instead focus on the unique talents and different perspectives that everyone brings.

At the end of the study, it would be useful to mention some limitations. This study is not broad enough as it only includes a few types of leadership. Covering more and different types of leadership in future studies will contribute to solving this problem. On the other hand, the research in this study was conducted on different samples from around the world. As a result, it is not possible to know which type of leadership is more or less effective on the same sample. The third and final limitation of the research is the possibility of some leaders and employees being biased regarding discrimination. Unfortunately, this issue cannot be freely expressed and discussed by all individuals.

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