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On Demand, but When? Scrutinizing Leadership on Demand Based on the Follower-Centric Leadership Approaches[1]

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On Demand, but When? Scrutinizing Leadership on Demand Based on the Follower-Centric Leadership Approaches

Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to determine when and under what conditions followers, especially knowledge workers, are in need of leaders. In order to achieve this aim, the "Leadership on Demand Scale" was developed. The research population consists of middle- and upper-level engineers working in businesses operating in the private sector. The developed scale is a 5-point Likert-type measurement tool consisting of 4 sub-dimensions and a total of 36 items. Regarding the structure of the scale, the sub-dimensions of Technical and Social Issues (α = 0.858), Personal Life Issues (α = 0.882), Perception of Managerial Behavior (α = 0.807), and Interaction (α = 0.705) were found to be reliable. The content validity of the scale was ensured through expert opinions, with careful attention given to covering all sub-dimensions of the concept. Construct validity was evaluated using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to determine whether the scale accurately measures the theoretical construct. Based on the study results, suggestions were provided for the leaders working with and through knowledge worker followers.

Keywords: Followership, Leadership on Demand, Leadership, Knowledge Workers, Scale Development

JEL Codes: M10, M19

Anında, Fakat Ne Zaman? Takipçi Merkezli Liderlik Yaklaşımları Bağlamında Anında Liderliğin İncelenmesi

Öz

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, takipçilerin, özellikle de bilgi çalışanlarının, hangi durum ve koşullarda ve ne zaman lidere ihtiyaç duyduklarını belirleyebilmektir. Bu amacı gerçekleştirebilmek için "Anında Liderlik Ölçeği" geliştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın evrenini özel sektörde faaliyet gösteren işletmelerde çalışan orta ve üst düzey mühendisler oluşturmaktadır. Geliştirilen ölçek 5'li Likert tipi bir ölçüm aracı olup, 4 alt boyut ve toplam 36 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ölçeğin yapısına ilişkin olarak, Teknik ve Sosyal Konular (α = 0.858), Özel Hayat Konuları (α = 0.882), Yönetici Davranışının Algısı (α = 0.807) ve Etkileşim (α = 0.705) alt boyutlarının güvenilir olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ölçeğin içerik geçerliliği, uzman görüşleri doğrultusunda sağlanmış ve kavramın tüm alt boyutlarının kapsanmasına özen gösterilmiştir. Yapı geçerliliği ise, ölçeğin teorik yapıyı doğru bir şekilde ölçüp ölçmediğini belirlemek amacıyla, Açımlayıcı Faktör Analizi (EFA) kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçlarından hareketle bilgi çalışanı takipçilerle çalışan liderlere yönelik öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Takipçilik, Anında Liderlik, Liderlik, Bilgi Çalışanları, Ölçek Geliştirme

JEL Kodları: M10, M19

Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Beyanı	Bu çalışma Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu tarafından 18.05.2021 tarih ve 69493 sayılı Etik Kurul Onay Belgesi ile bilimsel araştırma ve yayın etiği kurallarına uygun olarak hazırlanmıştır.
Yazarların Makaleye Olan Katkıları	Yazar 1'in makaleye katkısı %50, Yazar 2'nin makaleye katkısı %50'dir.
Çıkar Beyanı	Yazarlar açısından ya da üçüncü taraflar açısından çalışmadan kaynaklı çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

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1. Introduction

Leadership has been one of the most debated topics in management and organization studies since the early 20th century (Blom & Alvesson, 2015). Although efforts to understand leadership can be traced back to philosophers like Plato, Sun Tzu, and Machiavelli, there is still no consensus on what leadership truly is. The notion that leadership can be taught, and its impact is also a matter of discussion (Grint, Jones, & Holt, 2017). Despite attempts in mainstream leadership literature and popular management books to define it, leadership remains a complex and often misunderstood phenomenon (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011, p. 10). As a result, seeking a universal definition of leadership is likely futile (Grint, Jones, & Holt, 2017), as it requires a constructivist interpretation to be fully understood.

Both theoretical and empirical studies on leaders and leadership are extensive; however, the same cannot be said for followers and followership, which are essential components of the leadership process (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014; Larsson & Nielsen, 2017). It is often overlooked that leadership emerges through a relational, interaction-based collaborative process involving both the leader and the followers. Many influential scholars argue that a leader cannot exist without followers (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2010; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Moreover, from a constructivist perspective, leadership does not simply stem from an organizational position, and followership is not confined to it either (Almeida, Ramalho, & Esteves, 2023). In fact, through their interactions, leaders shape their own identities, while followers develop their identities as well (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

Today, followership is still considered a niche topic due to the dominant focus on leaders in leadership literature (Bligh, 2011). However, there has been criticism regarding the exclusion of followers from the leadership process (Baker, 2007). Follett (1949/1995, p. 170) argued that the most crucial element in the leadership process is the followers, yet this aspect remains inadequately addressed. She believed that both leaders and followers work towards a common purpose; in other words, organizational goals unite them. This study aims to explain the concept of "leadership on demand," which is particularly relevant for a group of followers known as knowledge workers. This perspective views followers as key elements that initiate and end the leadership process (Blom & Alvesson, 2014), aligning with follower-centric leadership approaches (Jackson & Parry, 2011). The research seeks to develop a scale reflecting the viewpoints of knowledge workers in mid- and upper-level positions within their organizations to better understand when they need a leader. This understanding will clarify when followers require leadership and contribute theoretically to future research on the role of followers in initiating the leadership process.

As stated earlier, the primary purpose of this study is to develop a scale that determines when knowledge worker followers feel the need for a leader, based on the concept of leadership on demand. This newly developed scale aims to assist researchers in addressing various questions related to the topic. These questions include which issues followers are most likely to consult a leader about, the conditions and circumstances that make followers feel the need for leadership, the stages of their careers when they require leaders the most, and the factors influencing followers' preferences between leaders who provide autonomy and support versus those who tend to supervise and intervene continuously.

Ultimately, it is expected that the Leadership on Demand Scale will enhance our understanding of when and why a leader is needed, as well as improve management processes in this context. The following sections will review the relevant literature, outline the methodology and findings, and conclude with the results and discussion.

2. Relevant Literature

In the following section of this study, the literature on followership, the concept of leadership on demand, and knowledge workers—who constitute the unit of analysis for this study—will be discussed.

2.1. Follower-Centric Leadership Approaches

Today, there is a prevailing understanding that, regardless of the problem, the solution lies in leadership (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2011). In this view, the leader is characterized as a completely separate individual from followers, unrelated to them, and usually positioned at the top of the organizational hierarchy (Collinson, 2006). However, leadership is a relational phenomenon, and in some cases, for certain followers, thoughts on how the leader manages the process may be more meaningful than the leader's own thoughts and actions regarding the process. In other words, there are no universally applicable behavior patterns for the leadership process at all times and places (Grint, Jones, & Holt, 2017, pp. 4-13).

In the past, followers in the leadership literature were characterized as passive or as components that could only serve as mediating variables in the leadership process. Today, however, the influence of followership on the leader's behavior is emerging as a highly interesting field of study (Oc & Bashshur, 2013). In other words, leadership is increasingly being perceived as an influence process that requires a certain level of voluntary compliance by those affected (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011, p. 4). From this perspective, leadership can be thought of as a phenomenological phenomenon (Pfeffer, 1977). Therefore, to understand followership, it is not sufficient to focus solely on the leader as in the past; it must be accepted that leadership is co-created by both leaders and followers (Riggio, 2014).

The understanding of the importance of followers and followership in leadership is quite longstanding; however, the emergence of follower-centric leadership approaches is relatively new (Almeida, Ramalho, & Esteves, 2023). As stated earlier, in traditional leadership theories, followers are often viewed as passive recipients of the leadership process (Baker, 2007) or merely as mediating variables (Collinson, 2005, p. 1420). While situational theory (Blanchard et al., 1996; Stoner & Wankel, 1986) and path-goal theory (House, 1971) do take followers into account, they tend to depict them as static and objective categories (Collinson, 2005, p. 1423). In transformational leadership theory, the leader's charisma is presented as something that followers must recognize (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Burns, 2003). Recent developments in follower-centric leadership approaches include notable works such as Robert E. Kelley's *In Praise of Followers (1988),* Ira Chaleff's *The Courageous Follower: Standing Up To and For Our Leaders (1995)*, and Barbara Kellerman's *Followership: How Followers Are Creating Change and Changing Leaders (2008).*

Leadership literature has traditionally focused on an idealized emotional influence process that favors leaders over their followers (Shamir, 1999). Problematizing the role of followers as a fundamental component of the leadership process is uncommon in this field (Baker, 2007; Bligh, 2011). Even follower-centric leadership approaches, which aim to explain the roles of followers, often fail to explore the social construction of followership or the specific roles of

followers. Instead, these approaches typically frame followership within the context of leadership (Collinson, 2006). Furthermore, such approaches generally maintain a leader-focused perspective and do not examine the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of followership (Carsten et al., 2010). In other words, while a world where everyone is a leader seems ideal, a key question remains: if everyone becomes a leader, who will the leader lead? (Garry Wills, cited in Burns, 2003, p. 26). Kelley (1998) expands on this idea by suggesting that having too many leaders could result in chaos, and organizations without any leaders might be more successful than those with an excess of them. The emergence of follower-centric leadership approaches has allowed followership to be seen as a "natural social phenomenon" within the leadership process, creating a necessary balance (Almeida, Ramalho, & Esteves, 2023, p. 83).

Among follower-centric leadership approaches, several key approaches are recognized, including self-management, servant leadership, and team leadership. Each of these approaches has a unique interpretation of followership. In the self-management approach, leaders focus on empowering their followers to act independently. This means that followers can become self-managing, take on greater responsibilities, and experience higher motivation levels when they cultivate their ability to lead themselves (Manz, 1986). Self-leading followers not only conform to existing goals and standards but also create their own performance standards and goals (Manz & Pearce, 2005, p. 134). In the servant leadership model, the leader is seen as someone who serves their followers. The primary goal of a servant leader is to nurture and develop followers by considering their needs and aspirations. This approach places followers' needs above those of the leader, enabling their personal development through the delegation of authority (Northouse, 2013). Conversely, the team leadership approach advocates for the delegation of leadership responsibilities to all team members, regardless of their formal positions within the organization (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 627). In this approach, team members continuously and collaboratively influence one another (Manz & Pearce, 2005, p. 135).

When followership is perceived as a meaningless and powerless phenomenon with negative connotations, it's no surprise that people are reluctant to identify as followers (Almeida, Ramalho, & Esteves, 2023). In follower-centric leadership approaches, leadership is viewed as a social and relational interaction between individuals, shaped by mutual construction (Collinson, 2006). This perspective suggests that leadership and followership are interdependent phenomena (Hollander & Webb, 1955). In this context, follower behavior is recognized as a crucial element of the leadership process (Gesang & Süß, 2021), emphasizing that leadership cannot occur without followers (Hollander, 2009).

With the evolving understanding of followership, followers are increasingly regarded as equally important as leaders. This shift points to a dominant perspective that prioritizes followers. Followership is seen as a fundamental component that can either enhance or undermine the leadership process (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). In essence, the leadership process is considered a collaborative effort between leaders and followers (Almeida, Ramalho, & Esteves, 2021).

2.1.1. Followership and Follower Characteristics

The question of why followers matter can be briefly answered by saying that it is the followers who make a leader a leader (Hollander, 1993). To fully understand followership, it is essential to examine both the leader's and the followers' behaviors in relation to work and tasks. Followers' behaviors can significantly influence a leader's emotions, actions, and attitudes (Gesang & Süß, 2021). In some instances, followers may even contribute to the emergence of destructive leadership behaviors, leading to serious negative consequences (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007).

It is also important to consider the social factors that shape followers' behaviors toward the leader (Carsten et al., 2010). Even when a leader holds a lower-level position, they often maintain a higher status than their followers. For followership to exist, followers must exhibit a certain level of respect for the leader. However, the relationship must be built on mutual respect (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007, p. 556).

Due to the hierarchical structure of organizations, followers are frequently viewed as having less knowledge, skill, and responsibility compared to their leaders. This perception can lead to an association of followership with obedience, blind trust, silence, and powerlessness (Courpasson & Dany, 2003, p. 1245). In contrast, leadership is often perceived by managers as the ability to enact organizational change, wield authority, and control followers (Bresnen, 1995, p. 506). In modern organizational settings, individuals in top management positions are more likely to display leadership behaviors than their followers. Conversely, followers contribute to this dynamic by accepting a lesser power role, which allows top managers to assume leadership positions (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 640). Additionally, whether an individual identifies as a follower or a leader in the workplace is not solely determined by the group's members; it is also influenced by various social factors. For instance, even if someone does not perceive themselves as a leader or a follower, if others view them as such, they may adopt that identity and engage in the leadership process (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 630).

Followers' perceptions of their leader significantly influence the leader's identity. This dynamic occurs because, while followers typically interact with only one leader, a leader engages with many followers (Gabriel, 1997). In their study, Carsten et al. (2010) classified followership into different categories. In passive followership, the follower acts only when instructed by the leader, does not question the leader's decisions, and does not contribute to developing new ideas or methods for the management. In contrast, active followership involves followers performing their responsibilities independently without needing direct instructions, yet they strictly follow organizational policies and the leader's methods without proposing any innovative solutions. Proactive followership goes a step further, as these followers take initiative and responsibility, completing tasks without waiting for guidance from the leader. They actively develop new ideas, introduce innovative methods, enhance their autonomy, and learn from their mistakes. Employees displaying proactive followership often do not value the complacency or uncritical behavior of other followers. Due to these traits, proactive followership shares many characteristics with leadership itself (Carsten et al., 2010). Blom and Alvesson (2014, p. 347) emphasize that proactive followers play a significant role in shaping a leadership situation.

Lastly, Kelley (1988, p. 4) notes that effective followers possess several common characteristics. They are brave, honest, and reliable individuals who successfully manage their own duties. These followers demonstrate commitment to their organization, its goals,

principles, and their colleagues. They also strive to enhance their skills and work towards creating a significant impact.

2.2. Leadership on Demand

Followers can influence the leadership process both actively and passively. Despite the asymmetrical power dynamics, they can play a decision-making role within this process (Almeida, Ramalho, & Esteves, 2023). The concept of "leadership on demand" is based on a framework that aligns with the evolving understanding of followership. In an empirical study conducted in knowledge-intensive organizations in Sweden, Blom and Alvesson (2014) found that followers often do not have a strong need for leadership. In some cases, followers may even obstruct the leadership process. For senior managers in these organizations, leadership is seen as essential, and they frequently consider what more they can do for their followers. However, the high level of intellectual capabilities among followers, particularly knowledge workers, leads them to perceive a leader's interventions as disrespectful and restrictive. According to Blom and Alvesson (2014), the principles of leadership on demand in such contexts are as follows: (1) followers have a very low demand for leadership; (2) the initiative to start the leadership process generally comes from the followers; and (3) the leadership process can sometimes be hindered by the followers.

Based on these principles, followers do not require "extra" leadership. Instead, the leader's role is to support the process and, when needed, offer various suggestions. In this context, the leader is expected to help resolve followers' personal problems and communicate potential issues to upper management. Consequently, followers may not always want their leader to intervene. Leadership only emerges when followers need it. This reluctance to be overly managed can negatively impact the effectiveness of leadership and the performance levels of followers. While leaders may view their passive stance as unfavorable, followers often interpret it as a sign of respect and confidence in their abilities. In the concept of leadership on demand, leaders remain attentive and only engage when the followers require their support (Blom & Alvesson, 2014). According to Meindl (1995, p. 332), leadership arises when followers shape their own experiences within the leadership phenomenon. This perspective emphasizes an active role for followers (Almeida, Ramalho, & Esteves, 2023).

After providing detailed information about leadership on demand, the next question should be whether a particular group of followers is more inclined toward it. This study focuses on such a group. Followers suited for this type of leadership are referred to as knowledge workers, who are generally considered to belong to Generation Y. Knowledge workers are employed in knowledge-intensive organizations. Excluding support services, these organizations employ individuals known as "golden collar" workers, and they are characterized by a high demand for knowledge (Blom & Alvesson, 2014). The concept of knowledge workers will be elaborated in the upcoming section.

In addition to the previous explanations about leadership on demand and the role of followers, it is important to consider the time aspect of this concept. This leads us to the question: "When do followers in leadership on demand require a leader and leadership?" In leadership on demand, followers are encouraged to take a proactive role. They have the ability to initiate, sustain, or even halt the leadership process when necessary. Therefore, this study focused on identifying the circumstances under which knowledge workers feel the need for leadership.

One of the fundamental qualities that followers seek in a leader is the leader's accessibility (Gabriel, 1997). In follower-centric approaches, it is argued that the leader's identification power during stressful times and periods of high performance tends to develop positively—in other words, charisma usually tends to get stronger (Bligh, Kohles, & Meindl, 2004). However, this may not apply to leadership on demand. In such contexts, it is stated that leader and follower identities are continuously negotiated in the work environment and that these identities can change instantaneously (Larsson & Nielsen, 2017). The complex tasks carried out independently by knowledge workers and followers' low need for leadership create a challenging environment for the leader. The leadership role that the leader tries to assume, outside of ordinary "administrative" tasks, is often met with a negative response. For followers, the leader is someone with superior technical knowledge. In addition, organizing social activities is expected to be part of a leader's responsibilities (Blom & Alvesson, 2014, pp. 351-352). For these reasons, studies on when followers feel the need for leadership would make significant theoretical contributions in this context.

2.3. Knowledge Workers

Knowledge workers have emerged as a distinct group of employees during the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society. They are individuals who benefit from the rapid changes in the nature of work and create new roles by adapting existing ones (Scarbrough, 1999, p. 7). This group includes professions such as research and development specialists, advertisers, educators, professional service providers, financial analysts, consultants, and engineers. Mumford et al. (2002, p. 708) characterize knowledge workers as "creative followers," despite creativity often being associated solely with artists. These followers not only generate ideas but also require a highly creative approach to develop and implement those ideas. Knowledge work demands skilled professionals who are experts in their fields, and it is structured as a system that integrates the knowledge of independent, qualified individuals. Furthermore, knowledge workers possess a certain level of self-management and self-motivation skills (Manz and Pearce, 2005, p. 133).

The proliferation of knowledge workers has led to the need for new leadership approaches. Leaders must objectively analyze information before making decisions, taking into account the opinions of their followers (Walumbwa et al., 2011, pp. 110-111). According to Pearce and Manz (2005, p. 130), followers—particularly knowledge workers—should play a significant role in shaping the leadership and leader's decision-making process. To foster creativity among followers, the responsibility for determining how tasks are accomplished should be shared with the followers. Research shows that knowledge workers prefer to approach tasks in their own way and often feel dissatisfied with excessive dependence on their leaders (Blom & Alvesson, 2014).

Creative followers typically seek autonomy and consider the amount of autonomy offered by an organization when evaluating job opportunities or making career decisions (Mumford et al., 2002, p. 710). Therefore, leaders should encourage knowledge sharing among their followers and cultivate an environment that welcomes new ideas (Bryant, 2003, p. 36). However, excessive involvement from leaders in the work of knowledge worker followers can be counterproductive, potentially leading them to take on high-risk tasks that are less likely to succeed (Mumford et al., 2002, p. 712).

3. Method

This study employed a quantitative research method to effectively address the research objectives while leveraging the extensive body of leadership literature. The methods section will outline the study's population and sample, the development of the Leadership on Demand Scale, as well as the tools for data collection, the data collection process, and the analysis.

3.1. Population and Sample

The study focuses on knowledge workers, often referred to as "golden collars" in the literature. Knowledge workers were chosen as the target population because they are not just passive followers who merely complete assigned tasks; rather, they are proactive individuals who embrace responsibility, continuously seek self-improvement, exhibit high levels of creativity, and frequently offer recommendations to their leaders. This approach is based on the idea that knowledge workers, as followers, tend to prefer leadership that transcends traditional characteristics. The research specifically targets followers of managers who are believed to align with their organizations' shared goals. In this context, the sample comprises 153 middle- and upper-level expert engineers from various private-sector companies. The study utilized a convenience sampling method, which is a type of non-probability sampling.

3.2. Development of the Leadership on Demand Scale

In the scale development process, we followed several key steps. First, we created an item pool and sought expert opinions on it. Next, we conducted a factor analysis and investigated the scale's validity and reliability (Balcı, 2001, pp. 142-143). Additionally, we adhered to DeVellis's (2017, p. 103) guidelines for scale development. The process began by determining the target of measurement, followed by the creation of the item pool and the establishment of the measurement format. We then gathered expert feedback on the initial item pool, assessed the inclusion of validation items, adjusted the sample size and number of items, reviewed each item, and optimized the length of the scale.

DeVellis (2017, p. 103) first suggests that what is intended to be measured should be clearly defined and emphasizes the importance of theory related to the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, an extensive literature review in the field of leadership was initially conducted in this process. As a result of the literature review, efforts were made to focus on the situations and times when followers feel a greater need for leadership and the roles they play in initiating the leadership process. In the scale development process, it is also necessary for the construct being measured to stand out from other constructs (DeVellis, 2017, p. 105). Taking this into consideration, care was taken not to include questions and elements related to other leadership approaches, such as "transformational leadership," or items intended to measure leadership styles in the structure of the leadership on demand scale.

In the next stage, we created an item pool aimed at selecting items that accurately reflect the scale's purpose. Since the items needed to be connected both categorically and theoretically to the scale's framework (DeVellis, 2017, p. 106), we included questions that measure when and in what situations followers communicate with their leaders. The initial draft of the scale contained as many items as possible. We sought feedback from five academics who are experts in management and organization studies. Their input led to modifications of some statements and the removal of others, as experts identified certain statements as expressing the same situation. The statements in the initial draft were

redesigned based on this feedback, in accordance with Saunders et al.'s (2009, p. 370) guideline that a scale item should effectively address the questions and objectives of the study. The final version of the item pool consists of 48 statements. In the subsequent stage, we decided to use a Likert-type scale, which includes the options "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Neither agree nor disagree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." This format is particularly suitable for measuring opinions, beliefs, and attitudes (DeVellis, 2017, p. 121).

The final draft was converted into an online form and sent to 50 expert faculty members in the field of management and organization studies at various universities in Türkiye to gather their feedback. To increase the response rate, the expert opinion form was resent weekly, and feedback was ultimately received from 10 out of the 50 experts. Items deemed inappropriate by the experts were examined and removed from the scale, and items suggested for revision were modified based on the notes provided. The final draft of the Leadership on Demand Scale was shared online with 30 engineers working at a company in the Eskişehir Organized Industrial Zone during the pre-testing phase. Participants were also asked to share their opinions on the statements and the survey completion process. The pre-test participants were engineers in mid-level positions with an average work experience of five years. Only qualitative feedback was sought and gathered during this phase of the study. After reviewing the responses to the questions and obtaining participants' comments during the pre-test, the leadership on demand scale was finalized. In the next step, validation items were also included in the scale. For example, to increase the reliability of the responses, certain sections of the scale included complementary items such as "I am bothered by my manager's interference in my work" and "I perform my job better with less managerial intervention."

Before we finalize this section, we need to discuss the validity of the newly developed scale. This study evaluates the validity of the Leadership on Demand Scale, focusing specifically on content validity and construct validity. To assess content validity, we aimed to determine whether the scale effectively represents the concept it intends to measure, along with its sub-dimensions. Experts reviewed the measurement items to examine how well each one corresponds to its intended sub-dimension. Their feedback was crucial in ensuring that the scale items accurately reflect the target concept in terms of language, meaning, and scope (DeVellis, 2017).

Furthermore, a comprehensive literature review was conducted during the scale development phase. This helped establish the theoretical foundations and sub-dimensions of the Leadership on Demand concept, allowing us to evaluate how well the items align with this framework. For construct validity, we evaluated whether the scale measures the theoretical construct it was designed to assess. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to explore the scale's underlying factor structure and identify which items grouped under specific factors. We analyzed the factor analysis results to assess the scale's conceptual structure and the consistency of the items with the theoretical framework. During this analysis, we examined factor loadings, the total variance explained, and the significance of the factors (DeVellis, 2017). The findings indicated that the scale effectively measures the intended theoretical construct. Consequently, the Leadership on Demand Scale was found to have adequate content and construct validity, with reliable foundations established for its validity. The scale accurately measures the target leadership characteristics and aligns with its theoretical scope and sub-dimensions.

4. Findings

In the research process, six general questions were included in the survey to identify differences among participants regarding their roles in the organization and the challenges they encounter, in addition to the scale items. Data were collected through online surveys, and a summary of the responses to these six questions is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Participants

	Responses			
	Less than 1 year	**1-5 years**	**5-10 years**	**More than 10 years**
What is the duration of your employment?	33 (22%)	75 (49%)	40 (26%)	5 (3%)
	Yes	**Not sure**	**No**	
Do you believe you perform your job effectively?	136 (89%)	17 (11%)	0 (0%)	
Do you think there are ways your work can be improved?	99 (65%)	30 (19%)	24 (16%)	
	Interpersonal problems	**Organizational/Managerial problems**	**Technical problems**	
What types of problems do you commonly encounter in your job?	28 (18%)	50 (33%)	75 (49%)	
	Formal	**Somewhat formal**	**Somewhat friendly**	**Friendly**
How would you describe your overall relationship with your manager?	43 (28%)	54 (35%)	46 (30%)	10 (7%)
	Private issues not related to work	**Individual work-related issues**	**Technical issues**	
What questions do you frequently ask your manager?	2 (1,5%)	54 (35%)	97 (63,5%)	

As shown in Table 1, approximately half of the participants reported having worked for 1 to 5 years, followed by those with 5 to 10 years of experience. Most participants believe they perform their jobs well, although many also feel that there is room for improvement. Participants face various challenges in their work, including technical, organizational/managerial, and interpersonal issues. Additionally, the majority of participants describe their relationships with their managers as somewhat formal, with some considering them somewhat friendly and others formal. Technical issues are the most common topics for consultation with managers. Before proceeding to the analysis of the scale data, it is necessary to conduct a test regarding the normal distribution of the responses (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 436). In this study, based on the skewness and kurtosis values, it was observed that the data are normally distributed. The skewness values for the responses to the first section of the Leadership on Demand Scale, which reflects participants' thoughts on technical work-related issues, range between -0.218 and 1.419, while the kurtosis values range between -1.327 and 3.356. For questions related to social issues at work, the skewness values range between -0.201 and 1.122, and the kurtosis values range between -0.1241 and 0.630. The skewness values for responses regarding private life issues range between -1.117 and 0.368, and the kurtosis values range between -1.345 and 1.004. As for the responses to questions about the manager, the skewness values are observed to range between -0.585 and 1.310, while the kurtosis values vary between -1.199 and 2.219.

4.1. Factor Analysis

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis of the Leadership on Demand Scale, the KMO value was found to be 0.772 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that it is appropriate to perform factor analysis on this scale (Seçer, 2015, p. 187). In the first analysis, a total of 11 factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were observed. The exploratory factor analysis initially explained 58.907% of the total variance. However, due to limited item loadings on certain factors, the analysis was revised by limiting the factors to six. In the revised analysis, the 6th factor had only three items, and the 5th factor showed negatively loaded items above 0.30. Using different combinations, the factor matrix was adjusted to contain a total of 4 factors; however, due to the complexity of the factor matrix, it was decided to use the orthogonal rotation method (Table 2). The removal of items loaded onto two factors was attempted, but this resulted in a decrease in the total variance value and negatively affected the factor loadings of other items. Considering the low number of factors and the absence of negative factor loadings, items loaded onto two factors can be positively evaluated in this case, as they load in the same direction on factors associated with the same latent variable (Seçer, 2015, p. 192).

Table 2: Factor Matrix and Rotated Factor Matrix

Factor Matrix					**Rotated Factor Matrix**				
	Factor					**Factor**			
Item	1	2	3	4	**Item**	1	2	3	4
M17	.671			-.369	M19	.749			
M18	.643				M18	.665			
M19	.628			-.375	M17	.652	.384		
M36	.617				M10	.644			
M10	.597	.384			M8	.621			
M39	.564				M7	.562			
M40	.562		-.412		M22	.524			
M32	.541	-.390			M16	.481			
M7	.537	.413			M20	.472			
M31	.537	-.449			M11_rev	.461			
M34	.530	-.498			M36	.456		.349	
M4_rev	.517		-.333		M5	.451		.421	
M5	.505				M25	.359			
M27	.495	-.346	.348		M26		.767		
M24	.492		-.315		M30		.753		
M35	.453			.444	M27		.710		
M22	.438	.345			M28		.699		
M20	.433	.335			M31		.621	.335	
M41_rev	.422		-.355		M33		.616	.461	
M16	.413	.391			M34		.543	.492	
M2_rev	.411		-.312		M32		.537	.379	
M6_rev	.363				M40			.692	
M11_rev	.355				M41_rev			.628	
M21	.330				M4_rev			.588	
M25	.313				M24			.531	

M33	.430	-.656			M6_rev			.531	
M30	.511	-.566			M2_rev			.525	
M8		.512		-.358	M39	.325		.431	
M26	.423	-.457	.411		M9				.592
M28	.323	-.441	.316	-.323	M14				.557
M15	.422	.430			M15	.388			.527
M14		.301	.475		M13				.476
M13			.377		M35			.419	.469
M1					M12				.453
M9			.435	.448	M1				.395
M12				.321	M21				.382

As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the Leadership on Demand Scale consists of four sub-dimensions, named "Technical and Social Issues (TSI)," "Personal Life Issues (PLI)," "Perception of Managerial Behavior (PMB)," and "Interaction (INT)." Items with low factor loadings and those showing positive loading on one factor and negative loading on another were removed from the scale. The total cumulative common variance of the factors is above 45%. The common variance of the factor named "Technical and Social Issues" is 22.248%, for "Personal Life Issues" it is 11.822%, for "Perception of Managerial Behavior" it is 7.468%, and for "Interaction" it is 6.473%. In the case of cross-loadings, if the difference falls below a predetermined threshold, the item is assigned to the factor with the higher loading, as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). Table 3 presents the results of the exploratory factor analysis.

Table 3: Results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factors	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Common Variance%
Technical and Social Issues		**.858**	**22.248**
I seek assistance from my manager for serious job-related problems.	.580		
I consult my colleagues for non-serious job-related issues.	.603		
I approach my manager for problems related to the organization at my workplace.	.656		
I can make important work-related decisions without consulting my manager.	.463		
I report any issues with the technical equipment I use at work to my manager.	.496		
I discuss disputes with my colleagues with my manager.	.654		
I bring up any problems related to the working environment with my manager.	.665		
I talk to my manager about psychological issues I experience at work.	.731		
I express concerns to my manager if I find the working breaks insufficient.	.488		
I communicate with my manager if I need to perform tasks outside my job description due to my colleagues' actions.	.542		
Organizing social activities at work is the responsibility of my manager.	.371		
I communicate with my manager quite frequently.	.451		

Personal Life Issues		**.882**	**11.822**
I consult my manager about personal problems that are not related to work.	.771		
I discuss health issues with my manager that do not directly affect my job.	.714		
I talk about family problems with my manager.	.700		
I seek my manager's opinion when making important decisions in my personal life.	.758		
I consult my manager before making significant investments for myself.	.627		
I value my manager's input when planning my holidays.	.524		
My manager supports me with the challenges I face in my personal life.	.609		
I find the support my manager provides for my personal problems to be sufficient.	.533		
Perception of Managerial Behavior		**.807**	**7.468**
I do not appreciate my manager's directives regarding how I should perform my job.	.507		
I am bothered by my manager's interference in my work.	.566		
My manager trusts me to do my job well.	.413		
I perform my job better with less managerial intervention.	.519		
My manager makes an effort to improve the working environment.	.549		
My manager consults with me and my colleagues when making decisions.	.428		
I am satisfied with my manager's work style.	.708		
I believe my manager could be a better leader for his/her employees.	.631		
Interaction		**.705**	**6.473**
My manager warns me about technical issues related to my job.	.380		
I consult my friends to resolve serious problems at work.	.599		
I discuss important decisions with my colleagues before making them.	.418		
My performance at work is influenced by my interactions with my manager.	.482		
My performance at work is affected by my interactions with my colleagues.	.547		
If I find something unethical in my work, I contact my manager.	.354		
I can communicate with my manager whenever I need to.	.525		
If I'm asked to do a job in an incorrect manner, I discuss it with my manager.	.490		

4.2. Correlation Analysis

If the goal is to have items that show a high level of correlation with each other, it is not sufficient for any item to correlate with only one other item; it must also show a high correlation with the sum of all remaining items (DeVellis, 2017, p. 134). In this study, it was decided to use Pearson's method for the correlation analysis. First, the correlations among items within each factor were examined, and then the correlations between factors were analyzed. Generally, the correlation values among the factor items were high. Only one item

in the interaction factor, which did not have a high loading value, was removed from the scale. When looking at the correlation coefficients between the sub-dimensions, a significant relationship can be observed.

Table 4: Results of the Correlation Analysis Between Sub-Dimensions

	Technical and Social	Personal Life	Managerial Behavior	Interaction
Technical and Social	1	.232**	.424**	.321**
Personal Life	.232**	1	.407**	.138
Managerial Behavior	.424**	.407**	1	.118
Interaction	.321**	.138	.118	1

***Significant Correlation 0.01*
**Significant Correlation 0.05*

4.3. Internal Consistency Reliability

For the research tool to be considered valid, the scale must also be reliable, meaning it should demonstrate a high level of internal consistency. Internal consistency indicates the strength of a scale; in other words, it reflects whether the same results can be obtained with other participants in the same research at different times and under different conditions using this scale. Internal consistency correlates each question's answer on the scale with the answers to the other questions on the same scale. Thus, it is possible to measure internal consistency among all question responses on the scale or among responses within sub-dimensions. Today, internal consistency, or reliability, is most commonly measured by a method called Cronbach's alpha test (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 374).

For the Leadership on Demand Scale, the results of the Cronbach's alpha test for the sub-dimensions were as follows: $\alpha = 0.858$ for the "Technical and Social Issues" sub-dimension, $\alpha = 0.882$ for the "Personal Life Issues" sub-dimension, $\alpha = 0.807$ for the "Perception of Managerial Behavior" sub-dimension, and $\alpha = 0.705$ for the "Interaction" sub-dimension. Based on these results, it can be said that the sub-dimensions of the Leadership on Demand Scale are reliable.

5. Result and Discussion

Leadership is a concept that can often be vague and overly idealistic (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). It is frequently depicted as a highly positive process where an individual inspires and is passionately followed by their followers (Collinson, 2012). Despite this ambiguity, leadership remains a significant topic in management and organizational studies, with extensive empirical research devoted to it. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that a leader can only lead or initiate the leadership process in collaboration with followers (Hollander, 1993). Therefore, followers play an essential role in the leadership dynamic and should be emphasized appropriately (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014).

This study focuses on the leadership on demand approach, which has recently gained attention among follower-centric leadership approaches. It should be noted that leadership approaches vary depending on the work being performed. Leadership on demand is a leadership approach that may be applicable to knowledge workers. In the leadership on demand approach, followers request the leader's support mainly in organizing "ordinary" work-related tasks when they believe the leader has superior technical knowledge. This

situation signifies an intense erosion of the exceptional qualities traditionally attributed to leaders in conventional leader-centric approaches. Followers' reluctance to be overly managed negatively impacts the effectiveness of leadership and the performance levels of followers. Although being uninvolved and passive may be perceived as a negative stance from the leader's perspective, followers often interpret this as a respectful stance, reflecting the leader's confidence in them. In the leadership on demand approach, the leader remains on standby and becomes involved in the leadership process when needed by the followers (Blom & Alvesson, 2014). In this context, the primary aim of this research is to develop a "Leadership on Demand Scale" to determine under which situations, conditions, and times followers—particularly knowledge workers—require a leader. The research population consists of mid- and upper-level engineers working in private-sector companies in Türkiye

After testing the data collected through the scale with exploratory factor analysis, it was determined that the scale consists of four sub-dimensions. The first sub-dimension, titled "Technical and Social Issues," measures whether participants consult their managers about technical and social issues they encounter in the workplace that affect their work and how frequently they do so. This sub-dimension includes items such as "I communicate with my manager quite frequently" and "I bring up any problems related to the working environment with my manager." The other sub-dimension, titled "Personal Life Issues," measures whether participants consult their managers about personal matters they encounter outside of work and how frequently they do so. This sub-dimension includes items such as "I seek my manager's opinion when making important decisions in my personal life." The third sub-dimension, titled "Perception of Managerial Behavior," evaluates whether participants find their interactions with their managers positive or negative and whether, in their view, their managers need to improve their leadership qualities. This sub-dimension includes items such as "I do not appreciate my manager's directives regarding how I should perform my job," "I am satisfied with my manager's work style," and "My manager consults with me and my colleagues when making decisions." The final sub-dimension measures how frequently participants communicate with their managers and colleagues and the extent of their connection to them. This dimension, called "Interaction," includes items such as "I discuss important decisions with my colleagues before making them" and "My performance at work is influenced by my interactions with my manager."

Alvesson and Blom (2014) introduced the concept of "leadership on demand" to describe the dynamic interaction between leaders and followers. Unlike traditional leadership, where the leader typically takes the initiative, this approach emphasizes that followers can also take the lead. This study aims to develop a scale that explores the situations, conditions, and times when followers need a leader, focusing on a follower-centric, leadership on demand approach. It contributes to a clearer understanding of leadership and emphasizes the growing importance of follower-centric leadership in today's business environment. The developed scale can identify topics where followers are more likely to seek guidance from their leaders, the specific conditions and situations that necessitate leadership, the stages in followers' careers when they may require more support, and when leaders should take action in real-time.

While relying solely on surveys to understand leadership has been heavily criticized (Fischer, Hambrick, Sajons, & van Quaquebeke, 2023), studying novel concepts—especially those within follower-centric approaches—can provide both practical and theoretical

contributions. Building on the work of Alvesson and Blom (2014), this study aims to operationalize and explore the conditions under which knowledge worker followers initiate the leadership process. According to the newly developed Leadership on Demand Scale, followers are seen as proactive participants in the leadership process, stepping up to lead when they face social or technical challenges that align with the literature. However, the sub-dimension related to personal issues may vary depending on the specific context, and this variability should be examined across different cultural settings. The other two sub-dimensions of the study align more closely with traditional, leader-centric approaches rather than follower-centric perspectives, indicating a need for further investigation.

In future studies, valuable insights can be gained by dividing participants into groups and examining how scores from the Leadership on Demand Scale sub-dimensions vary. Utilizing the Leadership on Demand Scale within a single organization that has a larger employee base could help assess how the behaviors exhibited by the same manager are perceived differently by various followers. It would also provide insights into the situations where followers feel a greater need for their leaders. Future studies should also evaluate convergent and discriminant validity by analyzing the scale's relationships with both related and distinct scales. This approach will enhance the validity and applicability of its measurements across various contexts.

Research in the literature also emphasizes identifying follower characteristics that enable effective leadership, as well as understanding follower preferences for leaders (Sy, 2010). The Leadership on Demand Scale developed in this study can help align follower characteristics with leader preferences. Furthermore, variables such as the followers' diverse characteristics, the size of the organization, and whether it is a corporate or family-owned business can be analyzed to identify differences in results.

To gain a deeper understanding of how followers influence the leadership process and when they seek guidance from a leader, an additional scale can be developed for managers. This would allow them to explore their own approaches, examine the underlying reasons for specific behaviors toward followers, and identify situations in which followers are more likely to consult them. Alternatively, these questions could be addressed through a qualitative research tool specifically designed to gather comprehensive insights.

Finally, if we acknowledge that it is the followers who elevate someone to a leadership position, or that leaders and followers are mutually dependent, we can conclude that the time and effort put into leadership training should also extend to the training and development of followers. Almeida, Ramalho, and Esteves (2023) highlight that follower training and development are often undervalued, especially in business schools. Given the influence of followership on the emergence of destructive leadership behavior (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007), the discussions around followership and the scale developed in this study are anticipated to enhance efforts in training and developing followers.

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Extended Summary

On Demand, but When? Scrutinizing Leadership on Demand Based on the Follower-Centric Leadership Approaches

Leadership has been a key area of focus in management and organizational studies since the early 20th century (Blom & Alvesson, 2015). While influential figures such as Plato, Sun Tzu, and Machiavelli have provided valuable insights into the nature of leadership, there remains a lack of consensus on what leadership truly entails. Extensive theoretical and empirical research has been conducted on leaders and leadership; however, the same level of attention has not been given to followers and followership, which are crucial to the leadership process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Larsson & Nielsen, 2017). Despite the long-recognized importance of followers in this process, followership-centric approaches to leadership have only recently emerged (Almeida et al., 2023). Moreover, in many leadership frameworks, followers are often depicted as passive recipients of the leadership process (Baker, 2007) or as mere variables that mediate this process (Collinson, 2005, p. 1420).

This study explores the "leadership on demand" approach, which is especially relevant for knowledge workers. Blom and Alvesson (2014) coined the term and used a qualitative exploratory study to define it; however, they did not address when and why knowledge worker followers might need leadership. As a newly introduced approach, leadership on demand is rooted in follower-centric leadership approaches (Jackson & Parry, 2011), where followers both initiate and complete the leadership process. Blom and Alvesson (2014) identified three main characteristics of leadership on demand: (1) The demand for leadership from followers is generally low. (2) Followers typically take the initiative to start the leadership process. (3) In certain situations, followers can impede the leadership process. Based on these principles, it is suggested that followers do not require "extra" leadership.

This study is based on extensive leadership literature and employs a quantitative research method to achieve its objectives. The research population consists of knowledge workers, often referred to as "golden collars." The sample included 153 engineers at middle and upper management levels from various private-sector companies operating in Türkiye. The development of the measurement scale involved several key steps: creating a pool of items, gathering expert opinions on that pool, conducting factor analysis, and testing for reliability (Balcı, 2001, pp. 142-143). Furthermore, the guidelines for scale development established by DeVellis (2017, p. 103) were followed to ensure a clear and effective process.

After conducting exploratory factor analysis on the collected data, it was determined that the scale consists of four sub-dimensions. The first sub-dimension, titled "Technical and Social Issues," evaluates whether participants seek guidance from their managers regarding the technical and social challenges they face at work, as well as the frequency of these interactions. The second sub-dimension, called "Personal Life Issues," measures whether participants consult their managers about personal matters encountered outside of work and how often these consultations occur. The third sub-dimension, "Perception of Managerial Behavior," assesses whether participants view their interactions with managers as positive or negative, as well as their beliefs regarding the need for managers to enhance their leadership qualities. Finally, the fourth sub-dimension, named "Interaction," measures the frequency of participants' interactions with their managers and colleagues, along with the strength of their connections to them.

The study aimed to clarify the leadership on demand approach by developing a specific scale for measurement. The findings highlighted the conditions under which followers seek support from their leaders. Overall, the results enhance our understanding of leadership on demand, particularly among distinct groups such as knowledge workers. Additionally, the study contributes to follower-centric approaches, which are increasingly important in today's business environment. Future research could yield valuable insights by categorizing participants into different groups to examine variations in scores on the sub-dimensions of leadership on demand. The Leadership on Demand scale can be applied to followers of the same manager or management team within a larger organization. This approach will help assess how a single manager's behavior is perceived by different followers and identify the specific situations in which followers feel they need their leaders the most. If we accept that followers play a crucial role in a leader's effectiveness and that leaders and followers are mutually dependent, then resources dedicated to leadership training and development should also focus on training followers. Almeida, Ramalho, and Esteves (2023) emphasize that followership training and development should be prioritized, especially in business schools. Given the impact of followership on the emergence of destructive leadership behaviors (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007), it is expected that discussions on followership, along with the scale developed in this study, will enhance efforts in followership training and development.