Investigation of College Students' Capability of Self-Leadership*

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Abstract

Self-leadership means, in a common sense, "the process of leading one's self with the achievements of individual and organizational success for gaining self- motivation." Self-leadership is also a concept that is linked and nested with one's self- motivating efforts. Self-leadership forms the basis of participativ e leadership as a type of leadership closely associated with the perception of gaining benefits from oneself. So primarily people should be able to lead themselves and, later on, they must be able to share the process with other individuals. Researchers seem to have adopted three self-leading strategies including behavior-oriented, natural reward, and creative idea model strategies. In the present study, private and public sector employees of different fields of operation were evaluated applying self-leadership scales. The objective of the study is to compare the self-leadership abilities of students from various university departments. In the study, factors affecting self-leadership were determined by implementing the self- leadership scale to 148 students from different departments. In addition, a reliability and factor analysis tests were conducted. In results of the study, Cronbach's-Alfa rates were determined as 0.89 for all subjects, which is highly reliable. The number of the factors were gathered under 8 titles in the Turkish version of the scale while the original had 9 factors. In the present study, the factors "determining the target" and "evaluating opinions/ideas" were excluded, and the items were gathered under 7 factors. These factors include imagination of successful performance, self-punishment, assigning reminders for yourself, talking to yourself, self-observation, focusing on natural awards, and the reliability coefficients of these factors are respectively 0.868, 0.761, 0.742, 0.819, 0.783, 0.712 and 0.767. Moreover, in scope of the study, the researcher analyzed the self-leadership abilities of the departments, and observed significant differences on self-leadership abilities considering demographic and departmental differences.

Key words: Self-leadership, Leadership of oneself, Leading oneself, Leadership abilities

Introduction

The stress and complicated workplace environment, defined by globalization, rapid improvements in technology, economic crises, decreasing resources, and increasing costs, put burden on leaders' shoulders (Lovelace et al., 2007). Moreover, due to the rapid changes in all fields, it is getting harder to make futur e predictions. In contrast to those improvements, corporations need captain-like leaders for rescuing thei r ships from the big, wavy storms. Besides, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) attaches importance to one's self-managing and auditing capability when difficult and important tasks are encountered. In recent years, researchers have placed importance on their research and have found the fact of and conducting a large number of research studies regarding the topic (Yavuz, 2010). Throughout the research, a wide range of leadership definitions and leadership types were emphasized.

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Leadership is people's effort of prompting their followers to reach independently or mutually determi ned targets through political, economic, and related factors (Burn, 1978). According to Eren (1998), leadershi p is the overall information and ability required for drawing followers' attentions to determined targets. In other words, leadership is the ability to persuade people to carry them to previously-determined targets (Davis, 1988).

According to various scientists, when leadership types and related approaches were examined, it can be observed that researchers encounter quite a large number of concepts considering leadership concept such as autocratical, acknowledged the complete free, participant or democratic (Sinha, 1995), charismatic (Bass and Avalio, 1992), transforms and interactionist sharer (Eren, 1998; Carson et al., 2007), and self -leadershi p (Manz, 1986). In the study, results of the self-leadership scale, implemented to 148 university students, who are studying in different departments, have been analyzed. Differences of students' self-leadership abilities from their demographic structures and study departments were determined. According to the results of the analysis, 7 factors have been found to have effects on the self-leadership abilities of students. These factors are imagining solid performance by setting target for oneself, imagining, assigning reminders for oneself, talking to oneself, self-punishing, and self-rewarding. Moreover, as a result of the study, self-leadershi p abilities have been observed to differ by the study departments.

Literature

The self-leadership concept has developed as an extension of the inspiration of Kerr and Jermier (1978) which arose from the idea that self-managing is based on the theory of self-control, instead of the concept of leadership (Manz and Sims, 1980). The substructure consists of the concepts of self -organizing, self-control (Houghton and Neck, 2002), self-impress, and self-managing (Neck and Houghton, 2006). The very first definition of self-leadership was given by Manz in 1986 as "the process of one's self leading with the achievements of individual and organizational success which is gained through self -motivation." The concept of self-leadership is formed by the comprehensive actions which concentrates on effective behaviors and ideas for self-impressing (Manz 1986). Self-leadership consists of the influence that people apply on themselves to motivate and direct themselves to perform the desired actions (Manz, 1992).

Self-leading is an individual influencing process consisting of self-directing and self-motivating efforts required for an individual's achievement (Neck and Manz, 1995). Self-leadership is all the strategies which concentrates on behaviors and ideas practicable for individuals' influencing of themselves. In this type of leadership, managing their personal behaviors are essential for individuals and any efforts performed for directing themselves are included in the scope of the leadership (Paksoy, 2002). This leadership has been defined as a process consisting of influencing, controlling, and directing the behaviors of oneself by using special behavior models and cognitive strategies (Houghton and Neck, 2002).

The scholars examine the concept of self-leadership under three basic categories including (a) behavior oriented strategies, (b) natural reward strategies, and (c) creative idea model strategies (Houghton and Neck 2002; Neck and Houghton 2006).

a) Behavior-Focused Strategies: It is the struggle of raising individual awareness for making one's self behavior management easier (Manz and Neck, 2004). This strategy is composed of the subcategories of setting a target for oneself, self-observing, self-rewarding, self-punishing, and setting self-reminders.

Goal Settings: Having personal targets that enables an individual to direct his or her behaviors and setting a target for him or herself can be stated as these are the most important ones among those strategies . Research shows that setting challenging targets for an individual can increase his or her performanc e significantly (Locke and Latham 2002; Neck and Houghton 2006; Politis, 2006).

Self-rewarding: Self-rewarding is one of the methods that motivates individuals and helps them control their behaviors (Manz 1992). Self-rewarding can be either non-physical or as simple as one's self- appreciation after an achievement and playing the favourite song as a reward. It can also be physical like a special journey as a self-reward after the successful completion of a project (D'Intino et al. 2007). In other words, it is one's self rewarding in either physical or a non-physical way as a result of an individuals' desired and expected behaviors (Manz, Sims 1980).

Self-punishment: In a similar way to the rewarding, one's preference for self-punishing methods can also be used as a tool for directing behaviors. In this way, the aim of self-punishing is to extinguish non-desired behaviors and in consequence of those behaviors to be expected to be directed in desired ways (Neck and Houghton 2006). However, the strategy of self-punishing may affect an individual negatively and cause a decrease in performance when it is used perpetually (Manz 1992).

Self-monitoring: In a similar way to the rewarding, one's preference for self-punishing methods is also a tool for directing behaviors. In this way, it is aimed to extinguish non-desired behaviors and in consequence

of those behaviors to be expected to be directed in desired ways (Neck and Houghton 2006). However, the strategy of self-punishing may affect an individual negatively and cause a decrease in performance when it is used perpetually (Manz 1992).

Clues strategies: This strategy provides a reminder for an individual about important issues that are required to be done, by reminding physical objects or other individuals, which could be regarded reminders (Manz 1992, Neck et al.,. 2006). Thus, an individual perceives the objects and people as guides and when he/she encounters one of these, he/she remembers the things to be done (Manz 1992).

b) Developing Constructive Thinking Patterns: The model includes extinguishing ineffectual beliefs and predictions and applying imagining and talking to oneself in a positive manner. On this point, the concentrated topic is an individual's managing and controlling ability of his or her mental models. (Burns 1980; Ellis 1977).

This strategy consists of, from one perspective, imagining solid performance, talking to oneself, evaluati ng self-ideas (Tabak vd., 2013) evaluating and reorganizing unrealistic beliefs and ideas to imagine a solid performance (Houghton and Neck, 2002) from the other perspective. By using the creative idea model, an individual can transform negative and disruptive internal speech to positive and creative internal speech. Internal speech, describes an individual's talking to oneself and mental self-evaluation (Neck and Houghton, 2006). The creative idea model predicts an individual finding natural rewards about his or her profession, solving the problems, and evaluating their self-leadership (Roberts and Foti, 1998). The concept involves imagining of the consummation accomplishedly before working on a study or a task (D'Intino et al., 2007).

c) Natural reward strategies: This strategy means one's efforts to focus on the undesired aspects of an action or activity, or one's struggles to build up the conditions under which she/he is motivated and rewarded by the action or activity itself (Houghton and Yoho, 2005). The reward strategy includes two basic subjects. The first one is to attach likeable and enjoyable activities to work so that the work itself is a natural reward. The second one includes putting the unlikeable portion of the work to one side and concentrati ng on the parts that can be seen as natural reward or the likeable portion (D'Intino et al., 2007). In short, the strategy increases an individual's self-determination, and the feeling of sufficiency provides concentrati on on the likeable parts of the work (Alves et al., 2006).

Although it is a play, the message of Massinger mentions academicians and leaders that admit self -control as the prerequisite for a large team and leadership that is critical for the success of modern corporations (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Whetten and Cameron, 2011). Most importantly, self-leadership literature shows that the positive effects of changes in self-leadership on someone else is a spillover benefit (Phillips et al., 2017).

Figure 1. Self-leadership Strategies

Figure 1 shows the strategies and subcategories included in the self-leadership concept. The self- leadership concept is composed of three main titles which are behavior-focused strategies, constructiv e thinking patterns and natural reward strategies. The title of 'behavior-focused strategies' includes 5 sub- titles which are given as goal setting, self-rewarding, self-punishment, self-monitoring and clues strategies . The 'constructive thinking patterns', on the other hand, includes three main sub-titles as desiring successful performance by determining goals, self-talking and assessing own thoughts and ideas.

Method

In this part of the research, sample selection, target population of the study, data collection tools, validity and reliability data, tools, and techniques used for the analysis have been included.

Purpose of the research: This research has been conducted with the purpose of determining the differences in the self-leadership abilities of university students according to their demographic structures and study departments.

Selection of Sample and Target Population: The target population has been formed by students of Hitit University Sungurlu Vocational School of Higher Education. The sample selection has been randomly made among the students of five different departments of vocational schools of higher education which have completed the survey in full.

Hypothesis of the research: In the research, to examine those relations, the hypotheses listed below are tested:

H1. There is a relation between demographic variables and self-leadership scale scores.

H1.1. There are significant differences between genders of the students and self-leadership scores. H1.2. There are significant differences between ages of the students and self-leadership scores.

H1.3. There are significant differences between type of high schools that students graduated from and self-leadership scores.

H.1.4. There are significant differences between the time that students spend in university and self - leadership scores.

H2. There are significant differences between departments of students and self-leadership scale scores.

Data collection tools: The self-leadership scale used in the research has been formed by translation made by Tabak and the others (2013) which has 3 dimensions, 8 sub-scales, and 29 subjects. First of all, the scale with 35 subjects developed by Anderson and Prussia (1997) and validated by Houghton and Neck (2002) has been reorganized and translated to Turkish. According to the study made by Tabak and the others (2013), the Turkish form of the study including 29 subjects and 3 dimensions of self-leadership scale has been declared to be reliable, valid, and available for application in Turkey. The reliability quotient of sub - sizes of Turkish translation is available. The reliability quotient of the scale has been calculated as 0,87.

Validity and Reliability Information: Reliability and factor analysis of the scale were calculated. Cronbac h - alfa value has been determined as 0.89 and reliable on high levels. Factor numbers of the scale have been gathered under 7 factors while the original scale had 9 factors. Imagining a solid performance by setting personal targets, assigning reminders for oneself, talking to oneself, self-punishing, self-rewarding, target setting, and reliability factors are 0.870, 0.801, 0.796, 0.702, 0.783, 0.770, 0.716 respectively. Self-leadershi p abilities have been found to be different among departments, and statistical data was included in results section. While the scale factor amount was 9 in the original scale, this number reduced to 8 during the adaptation of the scale into Turkish by Tabak and his colleagues (2013). The scale items, in this project, were gathered under 7 factors.

Table 1. Factor Analysis Result

Items	**Weights of the factor items**						
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
S23	0.775						
S22	0.754						
S25	0.713						
S24	0.699						
S27	0.609						
S26	0.443						
S20	0.404						
S12		0.848					
S21		0.827					
S5		0.736					
S15			0.786				
S7			0.712				
S16			0.412				
S8							
S9				0.751			
S18				0.569			
S14				0.536			
S17				0.480			

S11	0.454			
S19		0.819		
S10		0.781		
S3		0.645		
S1			0.822	
S4			0.573	
S2			0.474	
S29				0.787
S6				0.517
S13				0.508
S28				0.465

Table 1 demonstrates item charge and factors which is attained after factor analysis. These factors, imagination of successful performance, self-punishment, detection of reminders for himself, speak to himself, self-observation, focusing of thoughts on natural awards and their rel iability coefficients Cronbach's Alpha values are respectively 0.868, 0.761, 0.742, 0.819, 0.783, 0.712 and 0.767. It is determined that there are differences between section's self- leadership skills and statistical data which are included in findings part.

Findings

In this section, the base statistics defining sample selection and results of the applied analysis have been included.

Table 2. Statistics defining demographic structure

Variables	Value	f	Percent(%)
Gender	Male	58	39.2
	Women	90	60.8
Age	18-19	27	18.2
	20-21	91	61.5
	22+	30	20.3
Department	Computer Programming	38	25.7
	Child Development	37	25.0
	For. Trade	23	15.5
	Buss. Adm.	20	13.5
	Health Programs	30	20.3
Time spent in university	1	48	32.4
	2	86	58.1
	3++	14	9.5

Table 2 presents the statistics of the sample that affect the demographic structure. 60,8% of the sample are women. Moreover, %61,5 of the sample is between 20-21 years of age and 58,1% of sample have spent 2 years in university.

Table 3. Results of t-test regarding gender and high school type

	Value	N	X	S	Sd	t	p
Gender	Male	58	3.7	0.498	146	1.238	0.05
	Female	90	3.83	0.701			
High School	Vocational School	92	3.76799	0.65735	138	0.652	0.67
Type	Reg. High School	48	3.84195	0.59564			

When Table 3 has been analyzed, self-leadership scores have found to differ regarding gender (t(146)=1.238, p=0.05), however, have found that do not differ according to the high school type (t(138)=0.652, p=0.67). When table above is analyzed self-leadership scores of women (X=3.83) showed to be greater than scores of men (X=3.7).

Table 4. ANOVA test results regarding age group of students

Variable	Resource of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Average	f	p	Significant
Age	Inter Group	2.20411	2	1.10205	2.83491	0.06	-
	In-group	56.3678	145	0.38874			
	Total	58.5719	147				

Table 4 shows ANOVA test results regarding the age groups of the students. According to the results, there is not a significant difference between age groups.

Table 5. ANOVA test results regarding the departments of students

Variable	Resource of	Sum of	Sd	Average	f	p	Significant
Department	Inter Group	5.41012	4	1.353	3.638	0.007	-
	In-group	53.1618	143	0.372			
	Total	58.5719	147				

According to the ANOVA test results given in Table 4, study departments were found to effect the self - leadership scores ($F(4\text{-}143) = 3.638$, $p = 0.007$).

Moreover, when the Levene test, which has been made to observe homogeneous results, and results of the Table 5 have been examined, variances were found to not to be distributed equally ($p<0.05$).

Table 6. Homogeneity test of variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	p
4.020	4	143	0.004

Because of that reason, in order to examine the group differences, prefer Tamhane test, which is a post hoc test, were applied. Due to this calculation, the results listed in Table 6 have been obtained. According to the Tamhane Test results in Table 6, there is a significant difference between healthcare programs ($X = 4.00$), business administration ($X = 3.93$), and computer sciences ($X = 3.48$). Therefore, there is quite a few differences among departments.

Table 7. Inter-departm ent self-leadership scale score differences

	Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Computer Sciences	Child Dev	-0.33180	0.15896	0.338	-0.7908	0.1272
	Foreign Trade	-0.27346	0.18584	0.799	-0.8212	0.2743
	Bus. Adm.	-0.45254*	0.12901	**0.009**	-0.8287	-0.0764
	Healthcare Programs	-0.52208*	0.13405	**0.002**	-0.9109	-0.1333
Child Dev.	Computer Sciences	0.33180	0.15896	0.338	-0.1272	0.7908
	Foreign Trade	0.05835	0.19002	10.000	-0.5004	0.6171
	Bus. Adm.	-0.12074	0.13496	0.991	-0.5148	0.2734
	Healthcare Programs	-0.19028	0.13978	0.860	-0.5964	0.2158
Foreign Trade	Computer Sciences	0.27346	0.18584	0.799	-0.2743	0.8212
	Child Dev.	-0.05835	0.19002	10.000	-0.6171	0.5004
	Bus. Adm.	-0.17909	0.16578	0.967	-0.6790	0.3208
	Healthcare Programs	-0.24863	0.16973	0.808	-0.7570	0.2598
Bus. Adm.	Computer Sciences	0.45254*	0.12901	**0.009**	0.0764	0.8287
	Child Dev.	0.12074	0.13496	0.991	-0.2734	0.5148
	Foreign Trade	0.17909	0.16578	0.967	-0.3208	0.6790
	Healthcare Programs	-0.06954	0.10448	0.999	-0.3762	0.2371
Healthcare Programs	Computer Sciences	0.52208*	0.13405	**0.002**	0.1333	0.9109
	Child Dev.	0.19028	0.13978	0.860	-0.2158	0.5964
	Foreign Trade	0.24863	0.16973	0.808	-0.2598	0.7570
	Bus. Adm.	0.06954	0.10448	0.999	-0.2371	0.3762

Table 8. ANOVA test results with respect to time spent in university by students

Variable	Resource of	Sum of	Sd	Avg. of	f	p	Significant
Department	Inter-Group	0.638	2	0.319	0.799	0.452	-
	Within the	57.934	145	0.400			
	Total	58.572	147				

According to the ANOVA test results , regarding the time spent at university by student in Table 8, there is not a significant difference between self-leadership scores and time spent in university.

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

The scale defined as leading oneself or self-leadership, has been developed participating to university students in 2002 by Houghton and Neck. However, the study may have different results when it is applied in different cultural structures of different countries (Alves et al., 2006). The studies conducted in China have showed that the self-leadership concept has been distinctly perceived in Chinese culture and the scale was found to have six factors which is different from the original. It has been declared by Neubert and Wu (2006) that the scale applied and developed in the US sample group has not been perceived in a similar way to Chinese workers' perception. Consequently, they have revealed that the self-leadership scale has required to be performed with great numbers of empirical research in countries that do not share the western culture. Since according to the results of the research, the scales must be reorganized so that it can be universal in cultural dimensions.

According to the results of the self-leadership scale applied in Turkey at Hitit University, genders and departments of the students have been found to have relations with the scores of the scale and the results have been organized in table format. In other words, it was proved that H1.1 and H2 hypotheses were approved and admitted which are perceived as a justification of the H1 hypothesis.

Boundedness of the Research and Future W orks: This research conducted at Hitit University is seen as bounded as it has been conducted with 148 vocational school students of different departments. It is predicted that application of self-leadership scales to different universities and obtaining a great number of samples may cau se different results. For forthcoming works, the researcher aims to increase the number of samples and to compare self-leadership with other types of leadership.

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