

THE EFFECTS OF DECISION-MAKING STYLES OF LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES KNOWLEDGE SHARING WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

Nilüfer RÜZGAR*

Abstract

Creating, applying and sharing knowledge, constitute great importance for organizations in today's global business environment. In a business environment, in which competition is penetrated, managing and sharing knowledge properly within the organization is one of the requisiteness of making effective and sustainable innovations in order not to fall behind in the market. Thus, it can be assured that employees' sense of belonging to the organization is not destroyed and their organizational commitment is accrued. Correspondingly, in the event of employee turnover it can be assured that they will not trespass on the knowledge that they have previously acquired from the organization. In this sense, knowledge management appears to be one of the most important qualifications of a leader and it can easily be observed that the leadership style a leader holds has divergent effects on organizational performance along with knowledge management. The purpose of this study is to reveal which of the three different decision-making styles, defined as "autocratic", "democratic" and "sharing", are adopted and applied by the leaders, employees' attitude towards knowledge sharing in accordance with the leader's leadership style and the effects of the mentioned styles on organizational performance. In this sense, Fiedler's Contingency Theory and Vroom-Jago Decision-Making Model of Leadership are used as baseline. The research is conducted in organizations that are active in textile sector, in city of Bursa. According to the results, there is a statistically significant relationship between leadership decision making models and employees' knowledge sharing within the organization. There is a statistically negative effect of sharing leadership on formal knowledge sharing while there is a statistically significant and negative effect of autocratic leadership style on compulsory knowledge sharing. In addition, there is a statistically significant and positive effect of sharing leadership style on compulsory knowledge sharing. It has also been found out that there is statistically negative effect of democratic leadership style on in-company knowledge sharing.

Keywords: Decision-making, knowledge management, knowledge sharing.

LİDERLERİN KARAR ALMA TARZLARININ ÇALIŞANLARIN ÖRGÜT İÇİ BİLGİ PAYLAŞIMINA ETKİSİ

Özet

Bilginin üretilmesi, uygulanması ve paylaşılması; günümüz küresel iş dünyasında örgütler için büyük önem arz etmektedir. Rekabetin yoğun olduğu iş dünyasında, rakiplerin gerisinde kalmamak adına gerçekleştirilecek örgüt içi inovasyonların etkili ve sürdürülebilir olabilmesinin en önemli gerekliliklerinden biri, örgüt içi bilginin iyi yönetilmesi ve doğru bir biçimde paylaşılmasıdır. Böylelikle, örgüt çalışanlarının aidiyet duygusunun zedelenmemesi ve dolayısıyla örgütsel bağlılıklarının artması sağlanabilir. Buna paralel olarak, çalışanların iş değiştirme durumunda, eski örgütlerine dair sahip oldukları bilgiyi olumsuz amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanmamaları sağlanabilecektir. Bu bağlamda bilgi yönetimi, bir liderin sahip olması gereken en önemli yöneticilik özelliklerinden biri olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır ve liderin sahip olduğu liderlik tarzının, bilgi yönetimiyle beraber örgüt performansında da farklı etkilere sahip olduğu görülebilmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, yöneticilerin üç farklı karar alma tarzı olan "otokratik", "demokratik" ya da "paylaşımçı" liderlikten hangisini benimseyip uyguladığını ve bahsedilen karar alma tarzlarının, örgüt çalışanlarının bilgi paylaşımı hakkındaki düşünceleri üzerindeki etkilerini ile örgüt performansı üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda, Fiedler'in Durumsallık Modeli (Fiedler's Contingency Model) ve Vroom-Jago'nun Liderlerin Karar Alma Modeli (Vroom-Jago Decision-Making Model of Leadership) temel alınarak, yöneticilerin liderlik tarzlarının belirlenmesi ve örgüt

* Dr. Öğr. Üyesi., Bursa Teknik Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi Fakültesi, İşletme Bölümü, Bursa Türkiye, nilufer.ruzgar@btu.edu.tr
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çalışanlarının bilgi paylaşımıyla ilgili düşüncelerini ortaya çıkararak mevcut yöneticilerinin karar alma tarzıyla ilgili algıları ölçülmüştür. Araştırma, Bursa ilinde tekstil sektöründe faaliyet gösteren orta ölçekli örgütlerde yapılmış olup elde edilen bulgulara göre liderlerin karar alma tarzları ve çalışanların örgüt içi paylaşımı arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. Paylaşımçı liderliğin ve otokratik liderliğin, resmi bilgi paylaşımı ve zorunlu bilgi paylaşımı üzerinde istatistiksel olarak negatif bir etkisi olduğu görülürken, demokratik liderlik tarzının örgüt içi bilgi paylaşımının üzerinde pozitif bir etkisi olduğu ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Karar alma, bilgi yönetimi, bilgi paylaşımı.

Introduction

Leadership decision-making styles has been investigated thoroughly in multifarious studies. However, the effect of decision-making styles on knowledge sharing within the organization needs more scrutinized researches. It can easily be claimed that the most important asset of organizations is knowledge. Therefore, organizations should focus on human capital, which is competitive advantage, and aim at improving employees' knowledge. In order to acquire a sustainable competition power in a global business environment, in which there are multivariate organizations, "Learning Organizations" concept has been in business literature as a key term since 1960, thanks to Peter Senge (Atak and Atik, 2007). If organizations use incentives for learning and sharing knowledge, competitive advantage can be assured and the performance of the organization increases.

In this study, the focus is on revealing leaders' decision-making styles and their effects on knowledge sharing within the organization. In this sense, this study begins with a literature review in order to construe the previous findings. The research findings are discussed in the following section of the study. Finally, interpreting the research results and making recommendations for future researches, take place in the conclusion section.

1. Literature Review

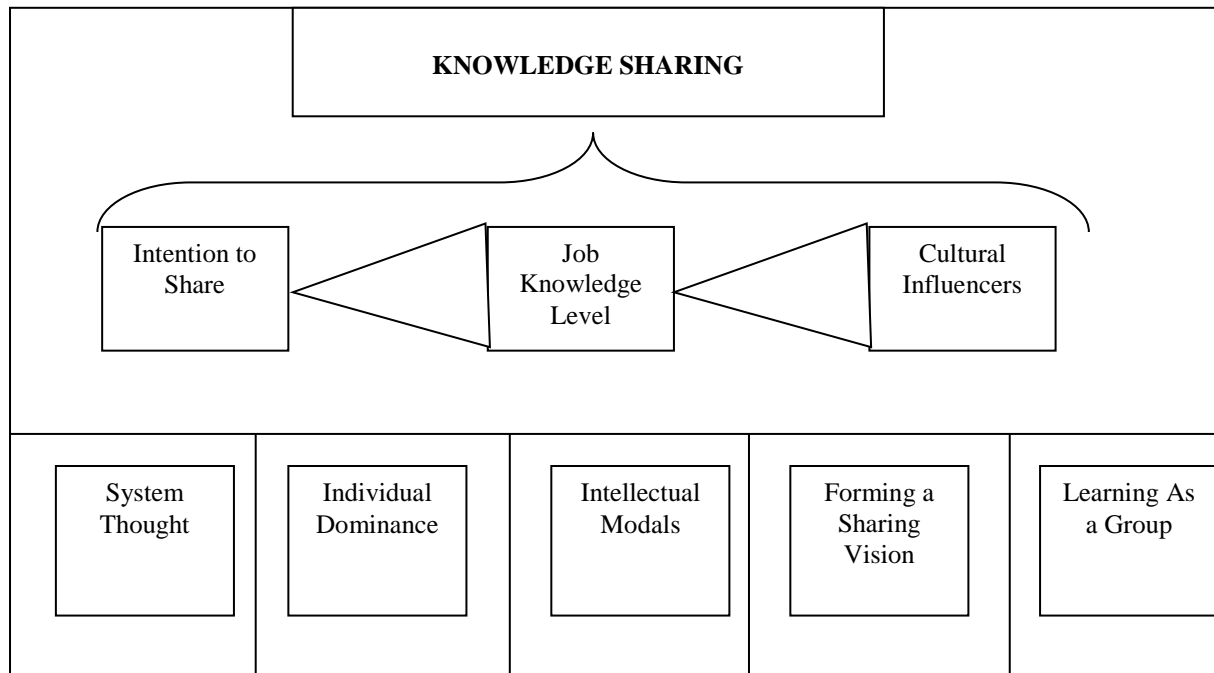
Fayol's classification of management is divided into 5 as prediction, organization, coordination, direction and control (Şengül, 2007). Fayol defines organization as "founding the firms in dual frame as social and material", and contextualize social organization for examination (Fayol, 1917). According to Peaucelle, Fayol's perception of organization in his management theory, requires procuring everything in order to run the firm. Therefore, sharing knowledge is crucial (Peaucelle, 2003).

1.1. Management and Knowledge Sharing

The purpose of knowledge management is, to reveal the tacit knowledge and assure the circulation of explicit knowledge within the organization in order to expedite and reach decision-making, production, resource allocation, competition, continuity and improvement (Çapar 2003, cited in Uzun and Durna, 2008). Transparency is the crucial condition of knowledge sharing. Knowledge, which is not reached or circulated in the organization, cannot be appreciated as corporate knowledge or corporate capital (Akdeniz, 2002). Sharing knowledge within the organization, constitutes more importance than possessing knowledge sources. The more organizational knowledge is shared, the more it increases in value. However, it is hard to share knowledge (Bryant, 2002). In this sense, both technological and managerial decisions along with human factors come into play (Yeniçeri and İnce 2005). According to Gurteen (1999), knowledge management is a business philosophy. The KMS is the on-going,

persistent interaction among agents within a system that produces, maintains, and enhances the system's knowledge base (Firestone, 1998).

Figure 1: Knowledge Sharing Process: 5 Fundamental Disciplines and 3 Factors



Source: <http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/ksculture>

1.1.1. Benefits of Knowledge Management

In order to create value, knowledge arises as the most important weapon. Furthermore, the more knowledge is shared, the more it creates value. Therefore, the best known paradigm “knowledge is power”, transforms into a new paradigm “knowledge sharing is power” (Gurteen 1999). In this sense, top management teams’ (TMT) leadership styles play a major role (Ravishankar and Pan, 2006). As leaders establish an organizational environment which is appropriate for decision participation and knowledge sharing, employees’ creativeness increase, in terms of innovations, for the sake of the future of their organization. Knowledge management, provides employees with the knowledge they need, to do their jobs better. Thus, they become more productive (www.mindtools.com). In order to make progress in terms of organizational growth, every super ordinate/leader should share knowledge with subordinates. For instance, in Microsoft, staff members are able to reach each key information about the strategies adopted. Furthermore, organizational trust increases and it leads to a considerable increase in efficiency. For example, Folger and Konovsky (1989), in their research on 200 manufacturing staff, assessed that in an environment which allows subordinates to trust their super ordinates/leaders, the rate of decision participation increases along with organizational performance. (Whitner, 1997). In other words, trust, canalize employees to share their knowledge, which results in increased values and sustainable competitive advantage (Renzl, 2008).

1.2. Leadership Styles

Contemporary theories of leadership put forward three styles; *transformational*, *transactional*, and *laissez-faire*. The *transformational leadership theory*, was first studied by Burns and appeared in 1978. It refers to a process, focusing on the exchange between leaders and followers by motivating followers' attitudes. It is the process of building employee loyalty to meet the organizational visions, missions, strategies and objectives by the leaders (Yukl, 1989).

The *transactional leadership*, connotes a communal process of exchange between leaders and followers, in order to persuade the followers to meet up their assigned duties so that the followers can claim the benefits such as pay, rewards, advancement or recognition from the organizations (Bass, 1990; Xirasagar et. al. , 2005).

The third style of leadership, which reflects the absence of these two styles, is *laissez-faire leadership*, it refers to passive/avoidant or no leadership. In other words, the leader avoids to make decisions, has negative influence on followers and avoid from dealing with problems (Alsayed et. al. , 2012).

In this sense, it would be crucial to mention about the leaders who support knowledge-sharing activities, namely distributing the information in a horizontal way of communication, and the leaders who do not support knowledge-sharing activities within the organization. The latter, prefers and apply vertical communication in the organizations. Table 1, presents the main differences between the two styles of leadership.

Table 1: Leaders That Do Not Support Knowledge-Sharing Vs. Leaders That Support Knowledge- Sharing Within The Organization

Non-Supporter Leader	Supporter Leader
Thinks like a boss	Thinks like a sponsor, team leader or advisor
Follows the chain of command	Leads the staff who are responsible for performing a duty
Works in an established organization	Transforms the organizational structure in order to keep pace with changes in the markets
Makes decisions individually	Allows other to take participate in decision making
Endeavours to dominate the important disciplines such as marketing or finance	Tries to allocate the managerial disciplines into a broad order
Demands long time	Demands results

Source: Dumaine, B. (1993). The New Non-Manager Managers, *Fortune*.

1.2.1. Leadership Decision-Making Styles

Decision making is a task, which requires utmost balance on the part of the leader. There are a number of leadership models currently in practice that help leaders make decisions. For example *Fiedler's Contingency Model*, *Hersey and Blanchard Situational Model*, *House's Path-Goal Model* and *Vroom-Jago Leadership Model*.

In this study, *Vroom Jago leadership Model* is taken into consideration. The Vroom Jago Leadership Model, relates leadership behavior and participation, for decision making. The model, makes the leader pose him/her a series of questions to which yes or no would be the

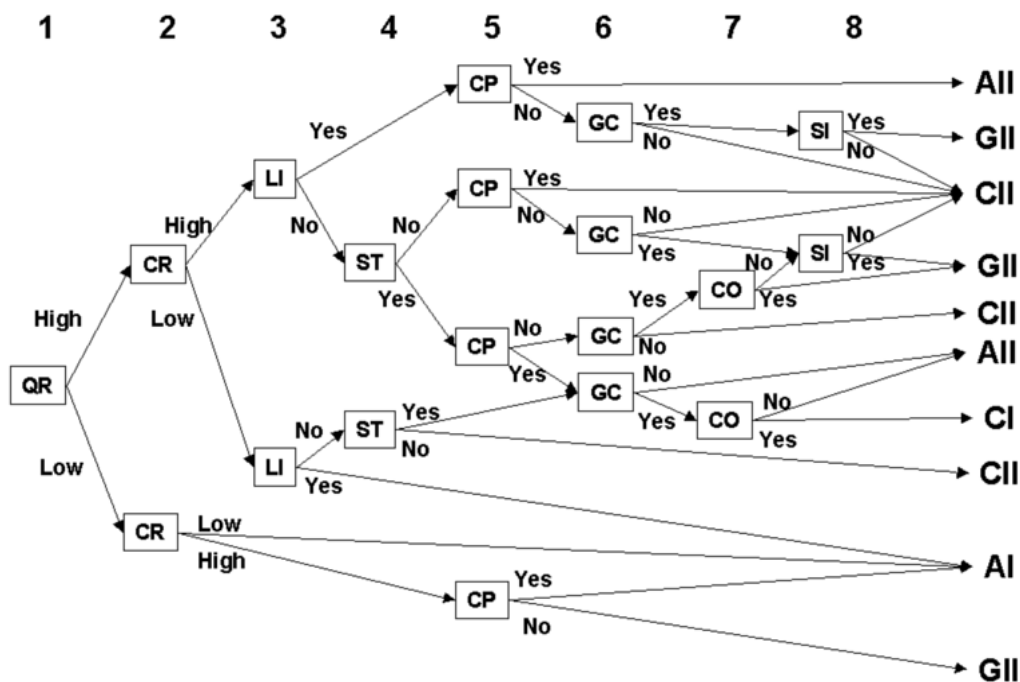
answer. After a series of questions about the decision to be taken and the situation at hand, the leader arrives at a conclusion, where as to take a decision all by himself/herself or to involve the group, and if it involves the group, to what extent. The Vroom Jago Leadership Model has a pre-defined set of decision styles the leader can wish to adapt:

Autocratic: The leader makes a decision completely at his discretion without the knowledge or consent of the team members in this style of leadership.

Consultative: The leader takes decision based on the input provided by the team members. The situation is discussed with each team member and input to the extent the leader thinks necessary is taken from each team member.

Group-based: This is the most open type of leadership model that is categorized in the Vroom Jago Leadership Model. The decision in this model is taken by the group while the leader acts a facilitator. This model is adapted in cases when the leader thinks the decision pending is really important (Yukl and Van Fleet 1992; www.123HelpMe.com).

Figure 2: Vroom Jago Leadership Model



Source: Vroom and Jago, (1988)

Employees’ commitment to their organization, the extent of knowledge sharing within the organization and the extent of job satisfaction, are crucial components of a target-oriented organization. Therefore, leaders can assure a sustainable commitment by increasing the level of knowledge sharing (Çarıkçı and Oksay, 2004). Knowledge sharing is used as an effective tool for revealing the knowledge that is not shared by others within the organization. Thus, this explicated knowledge assures a higher degree of commitment (Augier et. al. , 2001). Some researchers claim that by sharing knowledge, innovations become easier.

2. Methodology

In this section, the purpose and scope of the study is tried to explained. The suggested hypothesis are put forward and the measurement method is given.

2.1. Hypothesis

The purpose of the study is to investigate leadership traits and leadership decision-making styles of managers and revealing its effects on knowledge sharing within the organization among employees. The research is conducted on employees of medium-scaled textile organizations in Bursa. The results are generalized for textile sector. In this sense, following hypothesis are proposed:

H1: There is statistically significant relationship between leaders' decision-making styles and employees' knowledge sharing

H2: Autocratic leadership style affects employees' knowledge sharing degree in a negative way.

H3: Democratic leadership style affects employees' knowledge sharing degree in a positive way.

H4: Sharing leadership style affects employees' knowledge sharing degree in a positive way.

2.2. Measurement

In this research, Fiedler's Contingency Theory and Vroom Jago Decision-Making Model of Leadership is used as survey tools and it is aimed to define the managers' leadership styles and employees' approach to knowledge sharing. The primary target is to reach findings which prove that consultative type of leadership has a positive effect on knowledge sharing and the perception of employees about knowledge sharing. Furthermore, we expect that the leaders who constitutes for the type autocratic has negative effects on knowledge sharing extent within the organization. We also expect to find out that autocratic leaders pose obstacles to employees in the sense that their intention to share knowledge and this creates an organizational culture based on mistrust, which leads to lack of commitment. The findings are presented in the following sections.

2.3. Analysis and Findings

According to the reliability statistics, Cronbach's Alpha result of Decision-Making Model of Leadership Styles Scale, is 0,779 (Table 2). Thus, the scale can be defined as high in reliability.

According to the reliability statistics, Cronbach's Alpha result of Knowledge Sharing Scale, is 0,694 (Table 3). Thus, the scale can be defined as acceptable in reliability.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics of Decision-Making Model of Leadership Styles and Knowledge Sharing Scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Decision-Making Model	,779	12
Knowledge Sharing	,694	18

According to the factor analysis of decision-making styles of leadership, the scale items are categorized in 3 dimensions (Table 3). These dimensions are defined as *autocratic leadership*, *democratic leadership* and *sharing leadership*.

Table 3. Explained Total Variance

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% Varyans	Cumulative%	Total	% Variance	Cumulative%
1	5,459	45,488	45,488	3,969	33,076	33,076
2	2,024	16,868	62,356	2,846	23,719	56,796
3	1,787	14,888	77,244	2,454	20,448	77,244

According to the factor analysis of knowledge sharing scale, the scale items are categorized in 3 dimensions (Table 4). These dimensions are defined as *formal knowledge sharing*, *compulsory knowledge sharing* and *in-company knowledge sharing*.

Table 4. Explained Total Variance

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% Varyans	Cumulative%	Total	% Variance	Cumulative%
1	5,853	48,776	48,776	5,182	43,181	43,181
2	2,754	22,946	22,946	3,282	27,352	70,533
3	2,182	18,187	18,187	2,325	19,376	89,910

According to the regression analysis, *there is a statistically significant relationship between leaders' decision-making styles and employees' knowledge sharing*. Thus, *hypotheses 1 is accepted*.

When other factors' effects are accepted as fixed, an increase of 1 standard deviation in democratic leadership, causes an increase of 0,56 standard deviation in formal knowledge sharing (Table 5). Thus, democratic leadership increases formal knowledge sharing and *hypotheses 2 is accepted*.

When democratic and sharing leadership styles' effects are accepted as fixed, an increase of 1 standard deviation in autocratic leadership, causes a decrease of 0,757 standard deviation in formal knowledge sharing (Table 5). Thus, *hypotheses 1 is accepted*. Similarly, When democratic and sharing leadership styles' effects are accepted as fixed, there is a statistically negative effect of sharing leadership on formal knowledge sharing. Thus *hypotheses 4 is rejected*.

Table 5: Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	p
		B	Standard Error	Beta			
1	Democratic	,441	,038	,561		11,630	,000
	Autocratic	-,859	,050	-,757		-17,200	,000
	Sharing	-1,042	,125	-,352		-8,352	,000

Dependent Variable: Formal Knowledge Sharing

Democratic leadership, which is one of the factors that affects compulsory knowledge sharing, is excluded from the model because of its being statistically insignificant (Tables 6-7). When the model is tested, it is found out that there is a statistically significant and negative effect of autocratic leadership style on compulsory knowledge sharing, while there is a *statistically significant and positive effect of sharing leadership style on compulsory knowledge sharing*. Thus, *hypotheses 2 and 4 are accepted*.

Table 6: Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	p
		B	Standard Error	Beta			
1	Democratic	,013	,352	,064		,964	,336
	Autocratic	-,058	,013	-,204		-3,360	,001
	Sharing	,121	,017	,163		2,793	,006

Dependent Variable: Compulsory Knowledge Sharing

Table 7: Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	p
		B	Standard Error	Beta			
	Autocratic	-,050	,015	-,176		-3,309	,001
	Sharing	,138	,039	,186		3,499	,001

Similarly, there is a statistically significant relationship between all 3 leadership styles and in-company knowledge sharing (Table 8). While there is statistically *negative effect of democratic leadership style on in-company knowledge sharing*, there is a statistically *positive effect of autocratic leadership style and sharing leadership style on in-company knowledge sharing*. Thus hypotheses 2,3 and 4 are partially accepted.

Table 8: Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	p
		B	Standard Error	Beta			
1	Autocratic	,069	,042	,100		1,650	,100
	Sharing	,288	,105	,160		2,754	,006
	Democratic	-,147	,032	-,308		-4,641	,000

Dependent Variable: In-Company Knowledge Sharing

Conclusion

Knowledge sharing is one of the crucial applications in organizations that increases participation and empowers the employees. In order to compete with the organizations in developed countries, leaders/managers in organizations need to create knowledge and share knowledge effectively, because knowledge is strength and this strength increases as it is shared.

Although, according to the literature, making good decisions is one of the main leadership tasks, there is no research that focuses on textile sector in terms of leaders' decision-making styles effect on employees' knowledge sharing. In this sense, this study provides some descriptive

explanation for the leadership decision-making and its effects on knowledge sharing within the organization, the perception of knowledge sharing of employees. Regarding our research findings, leadership decision making styles have effect on employees' knowledge sharing within the organization. This study is a differential research in the sense that it is applied to the employees of textile sector. As it is widely known, textile is a dangerous sector in terms of employees' socio-economic situations and their lack of knowledge on these kind of subjects. The fact that they mostly perform tasks that do not require any expertise, make them stay ignorant against organizational behavior issues. Thus, it is obvious that there is a need of further researches on this subject both in textile sector and other sectors, so that there may have a chance of comparing the overall frame of Turkey in terms of this subject.

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Appendix 1:**Sayın katılımcı:**

Bu anket formundan elde edilen veriler tamamen bilimsel amaçlar için kullanılacak olup herhangi bir yerde yayınlanmayacak ve üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmayacaktır. Katkılarınız ve değerli vaktinizi ayırdığınız için teşekkür ederiz.

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KATILIMCI İSMİ (boş bırakabilirsiniz)	
KATILIMCI HAKKINDA	
Cinsiyeti	() Erkek Kadın ()
Medeni Durum	() Evli Bekar ()
Yaş	()18-29 ()30-39 ()40-49 ()50-59 ()60+
Eğitim Durumu	()Lise ()Üniversite ()Lisansüstü
Gelir Durumu	() 1500-2500 () 2501-3500 () 3501-4500 () 4500+
Sektör	()Kamu ()Özel

Bilgi Paylaşımı Ölçeği

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
1-Resmi toplantılarda (ör: seminer, konferans) bilgi paylaşıyorum.					
2-Çalışma arkadaşlarım, resmi toplantılarda (ör: seminer, konferans) bilgi paylaşımı yapar.					
3-Bilgi paylaşmam genellikle bana bağlıdır.					
4-Çalışma arkadaşlarım yeni bilgileri paylaşma konusunda birbirlerine güvenir					
5-Yazılı iletişim (ör: e-posta, rapor) yoluyla bilgi paylaşıyorum.					

6-Şirketimin bilgi sistemini ya da veri tabanını (ör: içweb, portal) bilgi depolamak için kullanırım.					
7-Resmi olmayan toplantılarda (ör: öğle yemeği, çay molası) bilgi paylaşırım					
8-Çalışma arkadaşlarım, resmi olmayan toplantılarda (ör: öğle yemeği, çay molası) bilgi paylaşımı yapar.					
9-Resmi toplantılarda bilgi paylaşımı benim bilgi birikimimi ve becerilerimi artırır.					
10-Resmi olmayan toplantılarda bilgi paylaşımı benim bilgi birikimimi ve becerilerimi artırır.					
11-Kolektif bilgi paylaşımı firmamın rekabet avantajını artırır.					
12-Çalışma arkadaşlarım bilgi paylaşımı konusunda oldukça açık fikirlidir.					
13-Bilgi paylaşımı firma/departman içinde takım çalışmasını teşvik etmektedir.					
14- Çalışma arkadaşlarım paylaşılan bilgileri koruma konusunda birbirlerine güvenir.					
15-Bilgi paylaşma tamamen benim dışındaki durumlara göre gerçekleşir.					
16-Bilgi paylaşmamda benim dışımda güçler daha fazla etkinliğe sahiptir.					
17-Benden beklenen bilgi paylaşımını benden beklendiği için yaparım.					
18-Bilgi paylaşımı, firmada yeni fikirler ve çözümler üretilmesini sağlar.					

Karar Alma Tarzı Ölçeği'ni yanıtlarken, iş le ilgili kararlar alırken uyguladığınız tarzları göz önünde bulundurunuz ve ölçek ifadelerine ne kadar katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtiniz.

Karar Alma Tarzı Ölçeği

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
Yöneticim, örgüt içerisinde bir problem olduğunda kendi başıma çözebilmek için bireysel karar verir.					
Her ne kadar kararı yöneticim verse de, bir ya da daha fazla çalışanın fikrini sorar					
Yöneticimin, tüm problemlerle başa çıkabileceğine ve kendi başına karar alabileceğine dair özgüveni yüksektir					
Yöneticim, tüm çalışanların verdiği karara uymak zorunda olduklarından emindir					
Bir problem olduğunda, yöneticim bunu başka örgüt üeleriyle bireysel olarak tartışarak, fikirlerini ve önerilerini alır					
Yöneticim, karşılaştığım bir probleme dair grup tartışması yaparak diğer örgüt üelerinin fikirlerini alır					
Yöneticim her ne kadar diğer örgüt üelerinin önerilerini değerlendirmeye alsa da, kararı kendi yargılarına göre verir					
Yöneticim, karşılaştığım bir problemle ilgili karar vermeden önce diğer örgüt üelerine danışmanın iyi bir fikir olduğunu düşünür					
Yöneticim, örgütsel konularda karar verirken tüm örgüt üelerinin karar verme sürecinde yer almasının çok önemli olduğuna inanır					
Yöneticim, grup olarak karar vermenin daha etkili olduğuna inanır					
Yöneticim, örgüt üelerini ilgilendiren konularda karar verme sürecinde diğer örgüt üeleriyle işbirliği yapmaya çalışır					
Yöneticim, örgüt üelerinin çoğunluğunun paylaştığı bir görüşe her ne kadar katılmasa da saygı gösterir					