The Relationship between Leadership Behavior and Organizational Commitment in Turkish Primary Schools

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Abstract: The present study focuses on the relationship between teachers' organizational commitment and school administrators' leadership behavior. In the survey model study, answers to the given questions were searched. The data were collected through a scale returned by a sample of 200 teachers in Turkish primary schools. The data were gathered by using "Leadership Behavior Scale" and "Organizational Commitment Scale". The study also attempted to determine the relationship between leadership behavior and organizational commitment. There was a moderate positive relationship between the teachers' perceptions about organizational commitment and supportive leadership behavior of school administrators. There was a moderate negative relationship between organizational commitment and directive leadership behavior of school administrators. Significant relationships were also determined between sub-dimensions of organizational commitment and directive leadership behavior of school administrators.

Key Words: Leadership, leadership behavior, organizational commitment, primary school, teachers**.**

Introduction

The behavior of employees in organizational life and their relationship with their jobs are affected by a lot of variables. One of the most important of these variables is leadership behavior of administrators for leadership is seen as the behavior of impressing people in many studies. The effects of leadership behavior on employees could be considered in a large scale which includes organizational commitment of employees (Blau 1985: 278, Dick et al. 2001: 114, Demir 2008: 95). Although there have been studies examining the relationship between leadership behavior and organizational commitment, it is seen that the number of studies conducted in education organiza-

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tions have been limited. A similar situation is also seen in Turkey. Therefore, it is considered important to determine the relationship between leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers in education organizations.

Leadership and Leadership Behavior

Leadership has been a very controversial concept and it has more than 350 definitions (Bennis et al. 1985: 4). Today, new definitions are added to the list as well. Despite the fact that there have been very different definitions of leadership, concept of 'influence' has been used in almost all of them (Balcı 1998: 31). One of the most important reasons for this difference in leadership definitions is the difference and leadership theories in positioning leadership. There have been many theories on leadership, and all of these theories have conceptualized leadership in different ways. First theories on leadership emphasized the personal characteristics of leaders, however, it can be seen that situationality has been stated recently. Situational leadership theories are based on the assumption that various conditions require various leadership styles.

One of the most important theories evaluated among situational leadership theories is Path-Goal Theory developed by House and Evans. In this theory, the way the leader impresses the followers, the way goals about the work are perceived, and the ways to achieve the goals are taken into consideration. According to Path-Goal Theory, motivations, satisfactions, and work performances of followers depend on the leadership styles chosen by their administrators (House 1971: 322, Sayles 1981: 59, Bass 1990: 46, Yukl 1994: 285).

Multiple dimensions of leadership behavior were carefully examined and revised in Path-Goal Theory studies. In this investigation, some dimensions such as leader initiating structure, consideration, authoritarianism, hierarchical influence, and degree of closeness of the supervision were determined. All dimensions were analyzed with Path-Goal Theory's variables such as balance and effectivity taken into consideration (House 1971: 324). As a result of these analyses, four basic leadership behavior were determined in Path-Goal Theory. These are supportive, directive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership behavior. Supportive leadership and directive leadership were dwelled on in this study. These leadership behavior forms two contrary poles. It was considered appropriate to take the two leadership behavior in accordance with the aim of this study.

Supportive leadership: Supportive leadership includes leadership behavior such as talking to people, supporting their efforts, giving them hope, solving their problems, and participate them in decision-making process (Rollinson et al. 2002: 383). Supportive leaders are the ones who show concern for their followers and establish an open, friendly, and approachable group climate, along with the ability to treat their co-workers equally (Lunenburg et al. 2000: 137, Hanson 2003: 176). Emotions and personal expectations are taken into consideration in supportive leadership. Leaders tend to stray from the path they follow for the sake of happiness and satisfaction of their followers (House 1971: 322). In this context, supportive leadership is the most effective leadership behavior on subordinates (House et al. 1991: 409). Supportive leaders in education organizations could be described as having characteristics such as being a model, appreciating and congratulating what has been done, helping their teachers, explaining reasons for criticisms, set constructive criticisms, and referring to studies for the sake of prosperities of employees and other people (Hoy et al. 200: 271, Yılmaz 2007: 15).

Directive leadership: Directive leadership is described as the situation where leader gives complete and essential directives on a particular subject (House 1971: 324, House et al. 1991: 408). Questions like "what to do, how to do, where to do, when to do, and who should do?" are clearly specified in directive leadership behavior. Performances of the organization members are secretly inspected and observed. Telling the expectations to those under the command (followers), planning, programming, controlling goal performance, and bringing out standards in behavior are the behavior of directive leadership (Lunenburg et al. 2000: 136, Rollinson et al. 2002: 383, Hanson 2003: 176). The leader explains followers' roles, and followers clearly understand what they are expected to do. Problem solving and decision making process are initiated by the leader. There is one-way communication in this dimension. Directive leaders in education organizations could be described as having characteristics such as dominating over the employees, observing whatever teachers do, controlling the activities, performing autocratic administrator characteristics, close inspection of teachers, and talking more than listening (Hoy et al. 2001: 270, Yılmaz 2007: 15).

Organizational Commitment

Studies on organizational commitment have an important role in analyzing organizational life. Therefore, they have been quite important both in management and education management literatures. The history of organiza-

tional commitment studies began in the 1960s (Becker, 1960 cited: Cohen 2007: 337). However, organizational commitment studies were one of the main research subjects in the 1990s (Meyer et al. 2002: 21) and the 2000s (Balay 2001). Moreover, various meta analysis studies (Meyer et al. 2002: 20, Cooper-Hakim et al. 2005: 241, Riketta et al. 2005: 491), books (Meyer et al. 1997, Cohen 2003), and new conceptualizing studies (Cohen 2007: 336) can be seen today.

Organizational commitment is defined as the relative power of one's participation in a certain organization and his identification with it (Potter et al. 1974: 604). According to Reichers (1985: 465), organizational commitment is the identification with the multiple element goals of an organization. Among multiple elements, there are immediate management of the organization, customers, and public. Organizational commitment is the adoption of organizational objectives, values, and goals by the followers, volunteer efforts, and desire for the continuous presence in the organization (Gül 2003: 49). As seen in the definitions, identification with the current organization forms the core of organizational commitment. In literature, it is seen that organizational commitment consists of at least three elements (Mowday et al. 1979: 226, Mowday et al. 1982: 24, Luthans 1995: 130, Kacmar et al. 1999: 977):

1. Strong belief and acceptance for the objectives and values of the organization,

2. Will to make considerable efforts for the organization,

3. Strong will to remain a member of the organization.

Generally, two commitment types – attitudinal and behavioral – are mentioned in organizational commitment researches. Attitudinal commitment means identification with the organization's goals and individual's disposition in these goals. Behavioral commitment is a process originating from the binding effect of actions on individuals (Reichers 1985: 468). In this context, behavioral commitment is a psychological situation reflecting the relationship between the employees and organization (Meyer et al. 1997: 9). In this research, organizational commitment was used as the commitment of employees in attitude level.

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986: 493) pointed out that there were compliance, identification, and internalization in the basis of organizational commitment. One of the classifications related to organizational commitment was realized by Allen and Meyer (1990: 2), and it was determined that it had three ele-

ments as affective, continuance, and normative. Affective and continuance elements were discussed in this study.

Affective commitment: Affective commitment is described as the identification of employees with their organization with sympathy (Allen et al. 1990: 2). In this context, affective commitment reflects the identification and commitment situation where the employees stay in the organization with their own will (Cheng et al. 2003: 467). Affective commitment is attitudinal based and in this situation the employee sees himself as a part of the organization. Therefore, it is very important for the organizations to have employees feeling affective commitment since strong affective commitment means employees willing to stay in the organization and accepting its objectives and values. According to Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979: 605), affective commitment is a strong belief and feeling of acceptance for organization's objectives and values, the employee's feeling of affective commitment towards his organization, and identification of himself with it and his participation into it.

Continuance commitment: Continuance commitment is a commitment situation originating from the needs of employees. In continuance commitment, the employees consider the disadvantages of leaving the organization and avoid quitting. Thus, the employee keeps his organization membership thinking it might cost him too much to leave the organization (Mowday et al. 1979: 605). Continuance commitment is not a negative situation though it is considered to be a negative commitment type by the organizations. Continuance commitment is the situation where employees stay in the organization considering the costs of leaving. However, the organizations definitely prefer affective commitment for affective commitment is the situation where organization's employees willingly stay in the organization and identify themselves with it along with an affective connection.

Leadership Behavior and Organizational Commitment Relationship

In many researches in the literature it was determined that there was a strong relationship between leadership behavior and organizational commitment (Morris et al. 1981, Bateman et al. 1984, Mowday et al. 1982, Blau 1985, Burns 1990, David 1990, Fjelstad 1990, Salancik 1991, Lok et al. 1999, Agarwal et al. 1999). These studies were generally conducted in organizations excluding education organizations, yet there were several researches (Tarter et al. 1989, Leithwood et al. 1993, 1994, Yu 2000, Leithwood et al. 2000, Yu et al. 2002, Geijsel et al. 2003, Sinden et al. 2004) conducted in

education organizations as well. There have been a number of researches conducted both in (Turan 1998, 2002, Yılmaz 2008, Yılmaz et al. 2008) and out of education organizations (Gül 2003, Kadirov 2003, Cevahir 2004, Ercan 2004, Dilek 2005), but they are only a few. Leadership behavior was discussed as a dimension of organization climate in researches conducted in education organizations. Accordingly, the aim of this research is to determine the relationship between school administrators' leadership behavior and organizational commitment.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between "supportive leadership behavior of school administrators" and "organizational commitment of teachers"?

2. Is there a significant relationship between "directive leadership behavior of school administrators" and "organizational commitment of teachers"?

3. Is there a significant relationship between "supportive leadership behavior of school administrators" and "affective commitment of teachers"?

4. Is there a significant relationship between "directive leadership behavior of school administrators" and "affective commitment of teachers"?

5. Is there a significant relationship between "supportive leadership behavior of school administrators" and "continuance commitment of teachers"?

6. Is there a significant relationship between "directive leadership behavior of school administrators" and "continuance commitment of teachers"?

Method
Design

This research is a general survey model aimed at describing the relationship between leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers.

Participants

The sample of the research consists of 200 primary school teachers working in different districts of Ankara and attending different master's degree programs of Ankara University Faculty of Educational Sciences in 2006–2007 academic years, who accepted to participate in this research voluntarily. Ankara is the capital and second biggest metropol city of Turkey.

Data Collection and Analyses

"Organizational Commitment Scale" (Modway et al. 1974) and "Leadership Behavior Scale" (Yılmaz 2002) were used as the data collecting instruments in the study. *Organizational Commitment Scale* was adapted into Turkish by Altunkese (2002). Organizational Commitment Scale consists of two sub-dimensions as affective commitment and continuance commitment. There are totally 25 likert type items in the scale. Total score the answerers get from the scale shows the organizational commitment level of the teachers. High scores the answerers get from the scale show high organizational commitment feeling whereas low scores show low organizational commitment feeling. The scale is answered as 1: Completely Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Moderately Agree, 4: Agree and 5: Completely Agree (Altunkese 2002: 11).

Leadership Behavior Scale consists of total 14 items and two subscales as Supportive Leadership Behavior Subscale and Directive Leadership Behavior Subscale. The scale determines participants' perceptions on leadership behavior. *Leadership Behavior Scale* is answered as 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, and 5-Always (Yılmaz 2002: 32). In the analysis of the data, Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

Results

In this chapter, correlational studies conducted in the light of each research questions were mentioned.

Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between supportive leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers?

According to results there was a positive and significant relationship between supportive leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers [r = .49; p <. 01]. There is a moderate relationship between the two variables. It can be said that 24% of the total variance in organizational commitment originates from the supportive leadership behavior when determination coefficient ($r^2=0.24$) is taken into consideration. In some other different studies conducted (John et al. 1999: 36, Turan 2002: 25, Yu et al. 2002: 380), it was also determined that there was a moderate, positive and significant relationship between leadership behavior and organizational commitment.

Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers?

According to results there was a negative and significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers [r= -.47; p<.01]. There is a moderate relationship between the two variables. It can be said that 22% of the total variance in organizational commitment originates from the directive leadership behavior when determination coefficient (r^2=0.22) is taken into consideration. Turan (2002: 25) also found out that there was a moderate, negative and significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment.

Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between supportive leadership behavior of school administrators and affective commitment of teachers?

According to analysis results there was a positive and significant relationship between supportive leadership behavior of school administrators and affective commitment of teachers [r=.48; p<.01]. There is a moderate relationship between the two variables. It can be said that 23% of the total variance in affective commitment originates from the supportive leadership behavior when determination coefficient (r^2=0.23) is taken into consideration.

Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and affective commitment of teachers?

According to analysis results there was a negative and significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and affective commitment of teachers [r= -.48; p<.01]. There is a moderate relationship between the two variables. It can be said that 23% of the total variance in affective commitment originates from the directive leadership behavior when determination coefficient (r^2=0.23) is taken into consideration.

Question 5: Is there a significant relationship between supportive leadership behavior of school administrators and continuance commitment of teachers?

According to analysis results there was a positive and significant relationship between supportive leadership behavior of school administrators and continuance commitment of teachers [r= -.29; p<.01]. There is a low relationship between the two variables. It can be said that 9% of the total variance in continuance commitment originates from the supportive leadership behavior when determination coefficient (r^2=0.09) is taken into consideration.

Question 6: Is there a significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and continuance commitment of teachers?

According to analysis results there was a negative and significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and conti-

nuance commitment of teachers [r= -.26; p<.01]. There is a low relationship between the two variables. It can be said that 7% of the total variance in continuance commitment originates from the directive leadership behavior when determination coefficient ($r^2=0.07$) is taken into consideration.

Discussion

According to the results of the research, supportive leadership behavior of school administrators positively affects the organizational commitment of teachers. In this context, it can be said that organizational commitment of teachers increases as supportive leadership behavior of school administrators increases. Accordingly, the statement that is "there was a negative and significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment" also reinforces this interpretation. According to the second question, there was a negative and significant relationship between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers. Thus, it can be said that organizational commitment levels of teachers decrease as directive leadership behavior of school administrators increases or vice-versa, since the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment was already determined by several studies (Blau 1985, Williams et al. 1986, Dick et al. 2001). For instance, according to Sinden, Hoy and Sweetland (2004: 200), when school administrators perform supportive behavior, teachers generally perform respectful behavior along with trust towards the school administrators.

It was determined that there were similar relationships between supportive leadership behavior of school administrators and affective and continuance commitments. Moderate, positive and significant relationships were found between supportive leadership behavior and affective and continuance commitments. Moderate, negative and significant relationships were found between directive leadership behavior of school administrators and affective and continuance commitments. However, the rate in the relationship between leadership behavior and continuance commitment was rather lower than the rate in the relationship between leadership behavior and affective commitment, because continuance commitment is about the costs of leaving the organization and is largely affected by the variables such as gender, age, seniority, career opportunities, salary, and marital status (Mathieu et al. 1990: 172, İnce et al. 2005: 70). Affective commitment is affected by quite different variables. Among these variables, there are enriched jobs, participation in management, autonomy, job difficulty, leadership, role situations, equality and justice, and feedback (Allen et al. 1990: 9, İnce et al. 2005: 70-

81). Many researches (İnce et al. 2005: 72) determined that there was a moderate and positive relationship between leadership types and behavior and affective commitment. Accordingly, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitments of primary school teachers and leadership behavior of school administrators. Performing either supportive or directive leadership behavior does not necessarily change this situation.

Supportive leadership behavior's structure that has the qualifications such as taking care of the employees, supporting their efforts, participating them into decision making process, establishing a positive organization climate, treating equally, considering happiness of the employees (House 1971: 322, House et al. 1991: 409, Lunenburg et al. 2000: 137, Rollinson et al. 2002: 176) perfectly explains the situation, because the employees who know that they are appreciated make much more efforts and feel commitment for their organizations. According to Salancik (1991), supportive leadership is effective on organizational commitment for supportive leadership style creates a friendly working atmosphere and provides an environment where the employees are well taken care of.

Directive leadership behavior's structure that has the characteristics such as close control over employees, inspecting employee performances, telling them what to do and describing them their roles, standardizing their behavior, not trusting them, not participating them into decision making process, and dominating them (House 1971: 324, House et al. 1991: 408, Lunenburg et al. 2000: 136, Rollinson et al. 2002: 383) could negatively affect the performance of employees and decrease group productivity. In this context, it is normal that directive leadership behavior has negative effects on organizational commitment since directive leadership has too much emphasize on rules and regulations.

However, it is not a desired situation to have low levels of organizational commitment in employees, because there are some negative consequences of having employees with low levels of organizational commitment. Since such employees do not see themselves as a part of their organizations, rates of being late for work, absence, and quitting jobs increase (Meyer et al. 1997: 9). In some studies (Mowday et al. 1979, Mowday et al. 1982, DeConinck et al. 1994, Clugston 2000), it was determined that the employees with high levels of commitment had less intentions of quitting their jobs. However, it was also stated that the relationship between organizational commitment and absence was not very strong. Nevertheless, in the literature,

it is generally accepted that organizational commitment causes a decrease in employee absence.

Eventually, there should be some regulations in organizational life that will increase organizational commitments of employees. Administrators are the primary people in charge to realize these regulations, because they are responsible for effective functioning of organizations. In this sense, one of the things administrators should do is to perform supportive leadership behavior. As seen in previous studies and their results, supportive leadership behavior of administrators has positive effects on organizational commitments of employees. Supportive leadership behavior is not the only determinative of organizational commitment. However, it is certain that it has a positive effect.

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Türk İlköğretim Okullarında Liderlik Davranışları ile Örgütsel Bağlılık Arasındaki İlişki

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Özet: Bu çalışma öğretmenlerin örgütsel bağlılıkları ile okul yöneticilerinin liderlik davranışları arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmıştır. Tarama modelindeki araştırmada, hazırlanmış olan araştırma sorularına cevap aranmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemi, ilköğretim okullarında çalışan 200 öğretmenden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri, "Liderlik Davranışları Ölçeği" ve "Örgütsel Bağlılık Ölçeği" ile toplanmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgulara göre, okul yöneticilerinin destekleyici liderlik davranışları ile öğretmenlerin örgütsel bağlılıkları arasında orta düzeyde, pozitif bir ilişki vardır. Okul yöneticilerinin direktif liderlik davranışları ile öğretmenlerin örgütsel bağlılıkları arasında da orta düzeyde ve ters yönlü bir ilişki vardır. Okul yöneticilerinin direktif liderlik davranışları ile örgütsel bağlılık alt boyutlarında da anlamlı ilişkiler olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liderlik, liderlik davranışları, örgütsel bağlılık, ilköğretim okulları, öğretmenler.

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Связь между руководствующим поведением и организационной приверженностью в турецкой начальной школе

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Резюме: Эта работа исследует отношения между организационной приверженностью учителей и руководствующим поведением администрации школ. Исследование проводилось методом анализа результатов опроса на подготовленные вопросы. Опрос был произведен среди 200 учителей начальной школы. Данные исследования были собраны посредством "Измерения руководствующего поведения" и "Измерения организационной приверженности". Согласно результатам исследования, между поддерживающим руководствующим поведением администрации школы и организационной приверженностью учителей существует положительная взаимосвязь среднего уровня. Между директивным поведением руководства школы и организационной приверженностью учителей существует умеренная отрицательная взаимосвязь. Также установлено, что и на низших уровнях существуют значительные отношения между руководствующим поведением администрации школы и организационной приверженностью.

Ключевые Слова: руководство, руководствующее поведение, организационная приверженность, начальная школа, учителя.

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