

The Effects of Leadership Behaviours of Academicians who are at Manager Position in Tourism Departments of Universities Offering the Undergraduate on Organizational Commitment of Employees

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate the effects of leadership behaviours of higher education administrators offering undergraduate degrees in tourism on organizational commitment of instructors. In the research, questionnaire was used as data collection method. The data was obtained from 198 academicians of 21 state universities in Turkey. In data collection, two scales; “organizational commitment scale” and “leadership behaviour scale” were used. In order to measure the academicians’ organizational commitment, Mowday, Steers and Porter’s organizational commitment scale was used. In order to determine the leadership behaviours of the administrators, the differences among their leadership behaviours and where these differences were if there were any, Leadership Effectiveness Analysis developed by Robert Kabacoff was used. In data analysis, statistical methods were used; reliability analysis, percentage, frequency, arithmetic means, standard deviation, correlation, two-way ANOVA, independent t-test and regression. These analyses were performed by using SPSS for Windows 15.0 package programme.

Keywords: Organizational commitment, leadership, leadership behaviour

1. Introduction

The research is important in terms of determining the extent to which the participation of the academic staff has been provided by management and leadership behaviours of the academicians in the academic process with administrative duties to the decisions of the administration and thus revealing what direction it effects the level of organizational commitment of the instructors. The main aim of this study was to investigate the effects of leadership behaviours of administrators on organizational commitment of the employees. Conducting the research at higher education institutions that offer undergraduate education in tourism can help overcome the problems caused by insufficient number of studies.

There are many factors that influence the commitment of academicians to their institutions. The fact that these factors are in favour of the employees contributes much to themselves and to their institutions. The individual’s increasing sense of belonging to the institution, leads to development of the sense of security. Rejecting the career development and job switch opportunities feeling that the individual can be useful for the institution, ensures a stable workforce that gives confidence to the institution. Employees having this determined and reassuring workforce embrace the aims of the institution and make an effort to be productive. Increased productivity leads to an increase in the quality of the education service, and this is ensured by the effective communication within the organization and the high loyalty of the employees to their organization. The quality of education provided by the academicians working in the institutions offering tourism education can also significantly affect the quality of service of students who graduate from these schools in the future.

Providing human-oriented services in the tourism sector, which is one of the service sectors, is highly parallel to the quality of education of the individuals working in this sector. Therefore, this situation is an indication of how effective the quality of education provided by the academicians in these institutions is. At the helm of providing high-quality education services of the employees of the institution, the fact that the employees view themselves as a part of the institution and that they have high commitment to the institution. In the light of the literature review, it was found out that there were few studies on "leadership behaviours and organizational commitment" of the academic staff in terms of applied fields. It is thought that the results obtained from this study will contribute to other academic studies.

2. Conceptual Framework

In organizations, the management style of managers or manager leaders is one of the most important factors in the commitment of employees towards their organizations. It is expected that the manager will have leadership qualities and will do the work that the leader does. For this reason, it is assumed that the concept of managerial behaviour of the manager has got the same meaning with the concept of leadership behaviour of the leader. It is stated that the management style used by the manager has a significant impact on the attitudes of the employees and this affects the organizational commitment levels of the employees (Gül, 2003a, Güçlü, 2006).

As Porter, Steers, and Mowday have stated, organizational commitment can be provided by using the effort voluntarily for the sake of the organization and building strong relationships in the organization within the framework of a strong trust of aims and values appropriate for the organization (Feinstein, 2006; Paulin, Ferguson, and Bergeron, 2006). The most important task of the manager in reaching the predetermined aims of the organization is "to keep the organization alive and to reach its goals successfully". In the achievement of these stated objectives, the manager must carry out all kinds of guidance and leadership activities (Türk, 2004). As a result of this, the concepts of leader and leadership in organizations have begun to become prominent.

Leader is a person who, under a given situation, time and circumstances, encourages the people to work voluntarily, helps them reach out common goals, conveys experiences, and makes followers be happy with the type of leadership applied so as to be able to reach organizational goals (Beauman, 2006; Holmes, 2005). Leadership is defined as a process of influencing, on a group at a certain time under certain conditions, that encourages people to strive to achieve goals, helps them reach common goals, conveys experiences, and makes followers be happy with the type of leadership applied (Andersen, 2006; Durukan, Can, Arıkan ve Göktaş, 2006). Leadership behaviour at different levels of management require different perception skills, different degrees and types of knowledge, and different emotional characteristics. Leadership skills that are valid at one level in the organization may be invalid at another level and may cause undesirable consequences. For this reason, the leadership behaviours that the leaders of the organization at different levels exhibit appropriate for their positions are of great importance in terms of the future of the organization as well as their own future (Taşkıran, 2005). Leadership behaviours express a permanent behaviour. These behaviours are the patterns of a certain group of behaviour. Behaviours exhibited by the leader may originate from the motives of leadership behaviour or from the person himself (Uysal, 2001). The most appropriate leadership behaviour can be achieved by balancing behaviours and functions against complex situations, by demonstrating the best course of action that employees necessitate, by adapting to environmental constraints, and by compensating for leader/manager weaknesses (Strang, 2007).

3. Methodology

In this section of the research, such topics as research model, population, data collection, data analysis and evaluation of the findings are given.

3.1. Research Model

As the research model in the study, "descriptive research model" was used aiming at revealing how and in what direction the leadership behaviours of administrator academicians were and their levels of commitment towards their organization. So as to investigate the effects of the leadership behaviours of administrator academicians on the organizational commitment of employees, "Explanatory (investigating causality-relationship) research model" was used. The independent variable in the study was "leadership behaviours" while the dependent variable was "organizational commitment".

3.2. Research Population

The population of the research was composed of the academic staff working at the schools of tourism and hotel management offering undergraduate education in the state universities of Turkey. The number of state universities included in the research was 21. The total number of individuals in the population was 300 (yok.gov.tr, 2009). Survey technique, which is one of data collection techniques, was used in the research. In the survey, there were 54 items about organizational commitment and leadership behaviour, and 8 items about demographic information. The survey was formed of three sections. In the first section of the survey form, there were the survey questions about the commitment of the academic staff to their organization. For this, "Organizational Commitment Scale", which was developed by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) and which was adapted into Turkish language by Topaloğlu and Sökmen (2001), was used. In the scale, there were 15 items, each 5 items of which aimed to measure affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

In the second section of the survey form, there were the questions asked so as to reveal the attitudes of the academicians towards the behaviours of the administrators. The scale used for this was "Leadership Effectiveness Analysis" (LEA), which was developed by Kabacoff and Management Research Group (1998) and which included the dimensions of leadership behaviour. The six leadership behaviour dimensions of the scale were; creating a vision, developing followership, implementing the vision, following through, achieving results and team playing.

In the third section of the survey form, there were items about demographic characteristics of the employees. These questions were; gender, age, marital status, education, seniority at the institution, net income per month, department and title. In the survey form of the research, each item about organizational commitment and leadership behaviour was graded according to Five Point Likert Scale and the academicians were asked to remark whether they agreed these items or not. According to the scale, the grading is; 5= I totally agree, 4= I agree, 3= I reasonably agree/I reasonably disagree, 2= I don't agree, and 1= I totally disagree.

3.3. Data Collection

The materials used in the research were primary and secondary resources. Primary resources are the data resources that are physically closest to the subject being investigated. Secondary resources are the data resources that have been collected from primary data resources (Erdoğan, 2003). The information obtained from the secondary resources constituted the literature of the study.

The survey was conducted between May 2009 and December 2009. As a result of the research, 198 out of 259 academicians filled in the questionnaire and sent it back. In terms of the reliability analysis, the Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability coefficient for the reliability of the organizational commitment scale in general (total 11 questions) was 0.86. As a result of the reliability analysis of each dimension of organizational commitment scale, the Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability coefficient was; 0.82 in affective commitment; 0.61 in continuance commitment; and 0.60 in normative commitment. The Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability coefficient for the leadership behaviour scale in general was 0.98. As a result of the reliability analysis, the fact that Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is between $0,80 \leq \alpha < 1,00$ indicates that the scale is highly reliable (Sipahi, Yurtkoru and Zinko, 2010). The values obtained showed that the questions forming both of the scales were consistent with each other and appropriate for measuring the attitude that was meant to be measured.

3.4. Data Analysis

After the survey investigation was completed, the questions on the survey forms were coded and the data obtained from each academician were recorded in the data files created on the computer. The analysis of the data from the survey was carried out phase by phase through SPSS 15.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) statistical package program. In the study, univariate analyses and multivariate analyses were used. In univariate analyses, frequency distributions of the data, arithmetic mean values and standard deviation values were examined.

In the study, "Independent Samples t-Test" was used to compare the mean scores of two independent groups. In the study, variance analysis was performed to test the mean difference between groups (Antalyalı, 2005). In the study, multiple regression analysis, which is one of multivariate analysis techniques, was performed in order to find the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Söndürmez, Taylan and Yaralıoğlu, 1995). From multivariate analyses, correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between the dimensions of organizational commitment and the dimensions of leadership behaviour (Karaca, 2001).

3.5. The Evaluation of the Findings Related to the Employees

The data about the demographic characteristics of the employees were evaluated by frequency analysis. 65.8% of the participants were male academicians. It was remarkable that the participation of female academicians in the research was lower than that of male academicians. 49.2% of the academicians were in the age group of 35-44 and 69.2% were married. It was seen in terms of educational status that the highest group was composed of the academicians with PhD degree with a ratio of 64.1%. It was also seen that the highest intensity in terms of the seniority at the institution was more than 16 years (18.7%), 10-12 years (16.7%), 7-9 years and 13-15 years (16.2%), respectively. When the academicians were analysed in terms of net income per month, it could be said that they earned between 1500 TL-2000 TL on average, with a ratio of between 1750 TL-1999 TL (29,8%) and 1500 TL-1749 TL (28,8%). In terms of their academic titles, the academicians who participated in the research were mostly assistant professors, with a ratio of 29.3%, followed by research assistants with a ratio of 23.7% and teaching assistants with a ratio of 17.7%, respectively. This finding suggests that the academic staff with a lower and middle level of academic title pay more attention and put more emphasis on time allocation and interest in such studies. In the demographical questions, the question that was asked for the academicians about which department (travel, accommodation, food & beverage, guidance and others) they worked for were not included in the assessment as that question was left out in the majority of the returned questionnaire forms.

3.6. Statistical Findings

In this section, the evaluation about the findings of the research was given.

- It was observed that the highest organizational commitment mean scores of academicians working at universities were in normative commitment. The fact that the employees feel indebted to their institutions (individual development programs, educational scholarships, etc.) may be effective in explaining this type of commitment to be high. At universities, the fact that this dimension of commitment was found at the highest level proved that moral values, faith and loyalty, which were also in the definition of normative commitment (Clugston, Howell and Dorfman, 2000), were important in the university setting. It could be said that employees perceived staying in their institutions as a moral obligation. The same conclusions were obtained in a study investigating the relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment (Çavuş and Gürdoğan, 2008).
- When considered in terms of the mean scores, it was seen that the level of affective commitment was close to that normative commitment. The fact that the employees' affective commitment to their institutions was almost equivalent to their normative commitment was a very important conclusion in terms of the institution. That employee saw themselves as part of the organization showed that their organization had a great meaning and significance for them. Hence, having a strong emotional commitment to the institution by its employees and high moral values, faith and loyalty in their institutions could be seen as a factor which make them continue to stay in the institution not because they need to but because they would like to. It is difficult to provide affective commitment in the employees at universities because it is quite difficult to control their emotional tendencies. For this reason, conducting research about what human resource activities can be conducted with regard to hiring employees that can be affectively connected to the organization will help to overcome this trouble.
- The fact that continuance commitment was the lowest among the mean scores of organizational commitment mean scores was not only remarkable but also satisfactory in terms of administrators. However, this conclusion shows that employees were not worried about the financial cost they had to stand in case of unemployment. The continuance commitment of the employees to the institution suggests that the individual is concerned of losing the relationships they experienced or have been experiencing and wants to remain in the current work environment, unwilling to move away from this environment.
- It was seen that in the attitudes of the employees towards the leadership behaviours of the administrators, the highest dimension was the dimension of "team playing". It was thought that the administrators of the academicians who participated in the research had a friendly approach towards their employees and could establish comfortable relationships with them. It appeared that the administrators paid attention to the ideas of the ones who were authorized after themselves, took these ideas into account in the decision-making process and benefitted from these ideas in practice. It is seen that these conclusions are in line with the conclusions of the studies on leadership behaviours of male and female administrators (Uzun, 2005).
- In general, the fact that the mean value of the leadership behaviour dimensions was 3.5 and above can be said that the tendencies of the academic staff in terms of leadership behaviours of the administrators are positive

towards "I agree" option. The following are the conclusions about the extent to which the leadership behaviours of administrator academicians influence the organizational commitment of the employees:

- One of the most significant conclusions of the research is that leadership behaviours explained 30% of organizational commitment. It was concluded that in explaining organizational commitment, the dimensions of leadership behaviour was not significant in the dimensions except for creating a vision dimension. There is also a research concluding that the leadership behaviour affects organizational commitment and affective commitment and normative commitment dimensions, which are sub dimensions of organizational commitment.
- Of the leadership behaviours of administrator academicians, the behaviour of creating a vision accounted for 35.3% of the affective commitment. This value showed that the dimension of creating a vision was important in explaining affective commitment. The fact that the dimension that best describes organizational commitment was the dimension of creating a vision (56%) statistically supports this result. It was also concluded that the other leadership behaviour dimensions were not significant in explaining affective commitment.
- It was remarkable that of the leadership behaviour dimensions, only creating a vision dimension had a high ratio of explaining continuance commitment. It was seen that the dimension of creating a vision was also statistically significant in explaining continuance commitment. It was concluded that the other leadership behaviour dimensions were not significant in explaining continuance commitment.
- It was found that of the leadership behaviour dimensions, the dimension that explained normative commitment was the dimension of achieving results. It was seen that the other leadership behaviour dimensions were not significant in explaining normative commitment.
- It was concluded that the employees' attitudes towards leadership behaviours of their employees were positive. These findings are summarized as follows: Creating vision behaviour of the administrators was the highest in the dimension of continuing commitment of the employees, and then in the dimension of affective commitment. This suggests that in vision determining implementations, the administrators make institutional decisions with long-term planning practices, forward thinking and objective analysis. Therefore, the tendency of the administrators to act strategically ensures that employees have a high level of continuance commitment. It was also concluded that in implementing the vision behaviour of the administrators, the employees' dimension of continuance commitment was the highest. When putting the vision into practice, the fact that the administrators clearly stated what they expected from their employees and try to provide solutions for them by concentrating on events rather than on the individuals when problems arise may have ensured the continuance commitment of the employees to be high. On the other hand, it was concluded that normative commitment dimension of the employees was the lowest in implementing the vision behaviour, and it was followed by developing followership behaviour and following through behaviour, respectively.
- When the relationship between the dimensions of organizational commitment and those of leadership behaviour was analysed, it was seen that in every dimension compared (except for team playing dimension), the highest correlation of commitment was continuance commitment. Following continuance commitment, it was remarkable to conclude that there was a medium level relationship between the dimensions of leadership behaviour and affective commitment behaviour (except for achieving results and team playing dimensions) and a low relationship between the dimensions of leadership behaviour and those of normative commitment. It was also revealed as a result of the studies conducted that there was a positive significant relationship between leadership behaviours and organizational commitment (Mathebula, 2004; Güçlü, 2006; Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas, 1999).
- The relationship between the dimensions of organizational commitment and demographic characteristics was found between marital status and affective commitment. It could be said that male employees were more committed to their organizations than female employees in terms of affective commitment. It was also seen that the employees' levels of continuance commitment and normative commitment to their organizations did not differ according to their gender. There are also studies showing that gender variable does not differ in affective, continuance and normative commitment (Güçlü, 2006; Boylu, Pelit and Güçer, 2007b). It was also concluded that demographic characteristics of the employees, except for the net income variable, did not make any difference on the commitment of the employees to their organization.

Seven out of twenty-seven hypotheses developed at the beginning of the study were accepted. The results of the rest twenty hypotheses were rejected. The first of these hypotheses "The leadership behaviours of administrator academicians have an impact on the organizational commitment of employees." Also answered the question "Does leadership behaviours of the administrator academicians have an impact on the organizational commitment of employees?", which was the research question of study. Therefore, this result, which was one of the most important results of the study, shows that the leadership behaviours of the administrators of higher education institutions offering tourism undergraduate education in Turkey generally affect the organizational commitment of employees. When the extent of this effect was examined, it was concluded that administrator academicians' creating a vision behaviour had an impact on the employees' affective commitment.

Administrator academicians' creating a vision behaviour had an impact on the employees' continuance commitment; and administrator academicians' achieving results behaviour had an impact on the employees' normative commitment.

4. Conclusion

Sustaining "human-oriented" education activities at universities shows how important the concept of commitment is for such institutions. This commitment is seen both as the loyalty of academicians, the loyalty of employees and the loyalty of the students who receive education as well. At this point, working conditions, working environments, colleagues and many other factors are influential in the commitment of the academicians to their institutions, initially the administrators (leader-manager) at the management position. The primary responsibility for the creation of an innovative and creative organizational culture and organizational climate belongs to the leaders-managers in charge of the activities of these large-scale institutions.

It is concluded that the academicians are influenced by leadership behaviours in continuance commitment at most. When the administrators are considered to have continuance commitment to their organizations the least, it is a rather interesting result that the administrators influence the employees' continuance commitment at the highest level. It is reasonable to assume that the behaviours of the administrators should not worry about having an impact on the academicians' continuance commitment, the work of the employees and their future while working at their institutions, and that they feel like a part of the institution. It is a remarkable conclusion that while the leadership behaviours of the administrators created a positive impact on the employees' continuance commitment to their organization, the employees exhibit continuance commitment to their organization at the lowest level. This conclusion that the employees exhibit low level of continuance commitment to their organization suggests that as a large quantity of the employees has PhD degrees, they have the least possibility of suffering from unemployment and high probability of seizing alternative job opportunities when they may have to resign from their jobs.

It is observed that of the leadership behaviours, affective commitment of the employees to their organization is the second most influenced commitment. It can be said that the behaviours of their leaders is influential in the employees' affective commitment to their institutions. This may show that the academicians are not only doing their jobs well but also affectively committed to the administrators of their organizations. When considered that the commitment of the employees to their organization is the psychological bond between the employee and the organization, it can be stated that an affective bond is created between the academicians in the universities and the management styles of the administrators. It is also concluded that of the leadership behaviours, academic staff is influenced in terms of their normative commitment at least. However, this shows that the opposite is true on account of the employees' level of commitment to their institutions. It is found that while the behaviours of the administrators affect the employees in terms of normative commitment at least, they are committed to their institutions at the highest level in terms of normative commitment. As a result, it can be said that the leadership behaviours of the administrators are less effective in the normative commitment of the employees to their institutions. After all, it is concluded that the leadership behaviours of university administrators have an impact on the organizational commitment of the academicians and this effect is positive. The influence of managerial leadership behaviours on the employees' commitment to their institutions coincides with one-third of it, when other factors are taken into consideration. Therefore, this result shows that the academicians at universities are influenced by other factors as much as two-thirds in terms of commitment to their institutions. Finding out how many those factors that affect the commitment to the institution influence the employees can help the administrators of the institutions determine what factors they should focus on and how they need to increase the commitment of their employees.

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