

TYPES OF LEADERSHIP THAT ARE MORE SUITABLE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to present and discuss decision-making views of different leadership theories namely ethical, authentic, transformational, zeitgeist, responsible, politically intelligent and charismatic. While doing so, the question of what types of leader are more suitable for public services organization is trying to be answered by focusing mainly on education and health service organizations. The paper claims that as different types of leadership theories take various issue into consideration in decision making, the outcomes of the decisions are likely to become diverse as well. Furthermore, regarding decision-making it is content that the leaders who tend to consider the ethical values and the stakeholders' views seem to be more likely to be appropriate for public service organizations compare to other types which is mentioned throughout this paper.

Keywords: Ethical Leader, Authentic Leader, Transformational Leader, Zeitgeist Leader, Responsible Leader

KAMU HİZMETİ VEREN KURUMLAR İÇİN DAHA UYGUN OLAN LİDERLİK TÜRLERİ

Özet

Bu makalenin temel amacı etik lider, özgün lider, dönüşümcü lider, zamanın ruhunu yakalayan lider, sorumlu lider, politik anlayışlı lider ve karizmatik lider gibi farklı liderlik teorilerinin karar verme şekillerini ortaya koymak ve tartışmaktır. Bu yapılırken, özellikle eğitim ve sağlık sektörü dikkate alınarak 'hangi tür lider kamu sektörü kurumu için en uygun olanıdır' sorusuna cevap aranmaya çalışılacaktır. Makale, farklı liderlik türlerinin karar alırken birbirlerinden farklılaşmasından dolayı, bu kararların sonuçlarında farklılık gösterdiğini ileri sürmektedir. Karar verme dikkate alındığında, bu makalede bahsedilen liderlik türleri içerisinde etik değerleri dikkate alan liderlik ile menfaat sahiplerini dikkate alan liderlik türlerinin kamu sektörü için daha uygun olacağı ileri sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etik Lider, Otantik Lider, Dönüşümcü Lider, Zamanın Ruhunu Yakalayan Lider, Sorumlu Lider

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, the issue of leadership has become one of the most discussed issues in social science. Leadership studies have mainly captured the attention of political scientists and organizational psychologists (Parry and Bryman, 2006). Scholars making research on this topic have put great emphasize on the issues of ethic, charisma, authenticity and decision making. Among these issues, it may not be too far to claim that, decision making is one of the most substantial ones (Vroom and Yetten, 1973). The reason why decision making has a crucial importance in the literature of the leadership is because the way how the decision is being made has a considerable effect not only on the current situation of the organization but also on the future of it.

In general, it might be claimed that existing leadership theories approach the issue of decision making from different points of views. While certain leadership theories such as ethical, authentic, and transformational, assert that ethic should be the most important criteria when decision is being made (Treviño and Brown, 2006), other leadership theories such as responsible claim that leaders must value the views of the stakeholder at the most when decision is being made (Maak and Pless, 2006). Thus, among the leadership theories, there is no consensus on the issue of what is the most important criteria that needs to be considered while decision is being made by the leader.

The main aim of this paper is to try to answer the question of "what types of leadership are more suitable for public sector organizations". To do so, leadership theories are divided into three categories regarding their decision making; namely, leaders who put emphasis on ethic, leaders who put emphasis on stakeholder and environmental factors and last but not least leaders who are self-interested. After the definitions of the different leadership styles, from theoretical and empirical point of view whether they are suitable for public sector organization is discussed at length.

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2. Leaders Who Put Emphasize On Ethic and Their Decision-Making

It has been argued that there are mainly four different types of leadership approaches, namely; ethical leadership, transformational leadership, authentic leadership and spiritual leadership which put great attention on ethic (Treviño and Brown, 2006). It is worth stressing that the spiritual leadership approach also takes ethic into account in decision making, however it is not taken into consideration in this paper, because it is almost impossible to see any spiritual leader as a chief executive in the public-sector organizations. To see how these three types of leadership theories approach the issue of decision making, although it is not an easy to do so, first definition of ethical leader, authentic leader and transformational leader will be given followed by the discussion of their potential effect on public sector organizations.

2.1. Ethical Leaders and Decision-Making

One of the most used definitions of ethical leadership is as follow; “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Brown et al., 2005: 120). The empirical research of Treviño et al. (2003: 18) demonstrates that along with being people-focused meaning that they care about people, respect people, and develop people, ethical leaders are trustworthy and honest. In terms of decision making, almost always having a good communication with their followers (Treviño and Brown, 2006) and considered to be highly principled and fair, ethical leaders are a kind of leader who do not only care about the people who work for them but also care about the society. This is important because, having a good communication with the followers, the leader of the organization observes what the requirements of the workforce are. More importantly, when a decision is being made ethical leaders take the view of the employees into consideration, along with the view of other stakeholders that are directly or indirectly influenced by the decision.

2.2 Transformational Leaders and Decision-Making

Burns (1987) asserts that transformational leaders influence their followers to approach the issues beyond self-interest and work collaboratively for collective purpose. In the literature, there is not an agreement on the issue of whether transformational leaders take ethic into consideration when decision is being made. For instance, Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) argue that like ethical leaders, transformational leaders almost always take ethical values into consideration when decision is being made. However, separating transformation leaders into two categories namely; authentic and pseudo, Baas and Steidlmeier (1999) argue that whether a transformational leader rely on ethic or not when decision is being made depends on the motivation of her/his. They claim that while the former one takes ethic into consideration, the latter one seems to not. In other words, they claim that transformational leaders’ decisions do not always rely on ethical values.

2.3 Authentic Leaders and Decision-Making

Authentic leaders are defined as “individuals who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character” (Avolio, et al., 2004: 4). Based on this definition Treviño and Brown (2006) claim that authentic leaders have four core characteristics; transparency, openness, consistency and self-awareness. Regarding decision making, Treviño and Brown, (2006) assert that like ethical leaders, authentic leaders are also ethically principled meaning that both takes the ethical consequences of their decision. In other words, for authentic leaders’ ethic is the one that needs to be taken into consideration in decision making.

2.4 Effects On Public Services

From public point of view, one of the most substantial requirements of the society are to see reliable and honest chief executives in the public-sector organizations. As it is asserted that “any instance of ethical misconduct is likely to result in negative publicity and loss of public and employee trust” (Pelletier and Bligh, 2006: 362). Relying on this claim it can be said that reliability of the chief executive has crucial impact on the credibility of the public services. It might be content that if the chief executive

of the public services uses ethical lenses, in other words, if they abide by the ethical principles when decision is being made, not only the commitment of the workers but also the commitment of the society to these organizations probably enhance.

Another issue which needs to be mentioned is the public ethos. Woods and Woods (2004) effectively argue that it is not the aim of the public-sector organizations to make a profit but to achieve the social goals which are mainly related with increasing public welfare and treating equal to all citizens. They further contend that in relation to public ethos, to maintain social objectives, the leader of the public-sector organizations should be honest and fair. Therefore, it might be inferred that ethical and authentic types of leaders seems to be appropriate for public sector organizations.

As it is stated in their definitions, decision making of ethical leaders and authentic leaders almost always take ethical issues into consideration. In other words, it is almost impossible to encounter with unethical decision of these types of leaders. Regarding this, it might be claimed that because of having ethical principles; such as being honest and fair to their workers' and stakeholders', ethical leaders and authentic leaders are likely to increase the credibility of the public-sector organizations. Furthermore, relying on ethic when decision is being made, these types of leaders are likely to pursue social goals of public sector organizations. On the contrary, taking the transformational leaders into account, as they are driven by their motivations, even they are not self-interested and even they almost always take the views of the workers into consideration in decision making, it is not guaranteed that their decision making relies on ethic. Therefore, as Woods and Woods (2004) argue that due to not considering ethic in decision making, pseudo transformational leaders might become an authoritarian. As a result, pseudo transformational leader cannot be considered as a good leader for public sector organizations.

Existing empirical studies provide supporting evidence for the idea that leaders who take ethic into consideration in decision making positively affect the performance of the organization. For instance, Khuntia and Suar (2004: 21) demonstrate that not only in private but also in public sector when the workers perceived their immediate superior is ethical, their unethical practices such as manipulative and expedient behavior, cheating in performance and misuse of finance, decrease considerably. Furthermore, they also show that ethical leader is likely to increase job performance, job involvement and affective commitment of subordinates of the organization. Empirical studies from Turkish public sector have also found similar results. For example, Cemaloğlu and Kılınç (2012: 146) scrutinize whether there is a relation between the level of ethical leadership behaviours of school principals and the level of organizational trust and mobbing in primary school. Their findings demonstrate that ethical leadership behaviours positively affect the organizational trust and negatively affect the mobbing. In a similar vein, collecting data from 9 foundation universities, Erkutlu and Chafra (2014) show that there is a strong negative relationship between ethical leadership and bullying in higher education in Turkey. As Cemaloğlu and Kılınç (2012: 147) effectively argue that the number of leaders that take ethic into consideration in decision making should increase in education sector, in order to increase to organizational trust and to decrease mobbing incidence. Cleek and Leonard (1998) approached the issue from a different perspective and they analyse whether decisions based on ethic has any impact on the performance of worker. Their findings show that unethical decisions are likely to have a negative impact on the workers' performance.

Empirical studies regarding authentic leadership in public sector have mainly derived from health organizations. Findings, in general, suggest that similar to ethical leader, authentic leader also positively affects the performance of workforce. For instance, empirical findings of Stander et al., (2015) demonstrate that authentic leader enable employees to work engagement which leads to better performance in the public health care. Furthermore, Taşlıyan and Hurlak (2016) show that there is a positive relation between authentic leadership and employee performance, in public and private hospitals, in Turkey. Additionally, their results indicate that there is a negative correlation between authentic leadership and intention to leave the organization.

3. Leaders Who Emphasis On Stakeholders and Environmental Factors and Their Decision-Making

In leadership studies, apart from ethic, contextual factors and opinion of stakeholders play a crucial role in decision making. There are two types of different leadership theories that takes these two

issues into consideration in decision-making. These are the zeitgeist leadership theory and the responsible leadership theory. While the former one puts emphasis on the contextual factors, the latter one mainly focuses on the views of the stakeholders when decision is being made by the leader. Before defining what is meant by zeitgeist leadership and responsible leadership it is important to highlight that both types of leader take ethic into consideration in their decision making but it is not their first preference. In other words, what makes them different from other types of leader that is mentioned above is that they do not only consider the ethics but they also take the contextual factors and stakeholders' view into consideration in their decision-making.

3.1 Zeitgeist Leaders and Decision-Making

It is worth stressing that, it is difficult, if not impossible, to define what is meant by zeitgeist leader. Mayo and Nohria (2005: 45) claim that "best leaders have an almost uncanny ability to understand the context they live in-and to seize the opportunities their present time". It is clear from this statement that according to Mayo and Nohria (2005) best leaders are talented enough in terms of understanding the environment they are in and they have an extraordinary ability to seize the opportunities within that time. They contend that there are six essential contextual factors, namely; demographics, global events, government interventions, technology, social mores, and labor that needs to be understood by the leader. They further assert if leaders are aware of these contextual factors and if they can understand the direction of these contextual factors, they can make an effective decision which is likely to increase the strength of the organization they work for. In short to reach their desired goals, leaders need to consider these contextual factors into consideration in their decision-making.

3.2 Responsible Leaders and Decision-Making

Maak and Pless (2006) argue that one of the most important qualities that a responsible leader need is to have a relational intelligence. Pless and Maak (2005: 2) define relational intelligence as "a capacity to engage in relationships: an ability to connect and interact effectively and respectfully with people and stakeholders from various backgrounds, diverse cultures and with different interests, inside and outside the organization...". Based on this definition, it might be claimed that relational intelligence has two components, emotional intelligence and ethical intelligence (Maak and Pless, 2006). First component of the relational intelligence that is emotional intelligence is defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990: 189) as follow "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling and emotions to discriminate among them to use this information guide one's thinking and actions". The second component of relational intelligence that is ethical intelligence is based on the combination of moral awareness, moral reflection and moral imagination (Maak and Pless, 2006). The former one means that to be able to observe and comprehend values and norms of the individuals and to be able to acknowledge the differences between them; the middle one means that leaders to be critical not only towards themselves but also towards the organization and stakeholders; and lastly the latter one means that imagination which enables a leader to acknowledge the moral dilemmas and solve it without compromising his/her integrity (Maak and Pless, 2006). It is important to highlight that according to Maak and Pless (2006) responsible leaders should have not only emotional intelligence but also ethical intelligence to guide their action and behavior in interaction.

In terms of decision making the first and the second components of the emotional intelligence which are moral awareness and moral reflection play an important role. Relying on these components, it can be said having these two abilities enable leaders to make balanced, informed and morally sound decisions. In other words, responsible leaders not only take the ethical point of view but also consider all stakeholders view when decision is being made.

3.3 Effects On Public Services

In relation to decision making, as zeitgeist leaders are seen suitable director for private sectors, it might be claimed that this type of leadership is likely to have a positive impact on public sector organizations too. As Şahin and Temizel (2007: 192) argue that there is a shift from industrialized society to the knowledge society. Therefore, if public sector leaders, in all level, want to be successful, they need to seize the time and contextual factor they are in and have. It might be claimed that having an ability to recognize the context they live in and making a successful prediction for the future is likely to enable the zeitgeist leaders to make a successful decision in health and education sector.

It might be claimed that, to make a better decision, chief executives of public sector organizations, especially health and education, needs to take the contextual factors that is considered by zeitgeist leader into account. For instance, regarding the demographic factors, as it is obvious that the health problems of the young and elderly people are generally differ from each other. In addition, as it is well known that the nature of the population has gradually changed. The proportion of the elderly people in population has considerably increased and vice versa. Therefore, a good zeitgeist leader should predict this demographic change, and s/he may adopt new health policies according to this demographic context.

Another important contextual factor that needs to be taken into consideration in decision making in public sector is labour force. Baeza (2005) claims that there is a relation between working condition and health status. He contends that over the last few decades, the workforce of the United Kingdom has considerably changed. He asserts that the proportion of the labour who works in heavy industry has strikingly decreased while the proportion of the labour who works in service industry has relatively increased. Related with this issue he claims that the numbers of the injuries have decreased. However, the proportion of the disease which is caused by stress has considerably increased. Moreover, changing nature of the labour force is also related with education. Instead of having a more seat for engineers, universities may enlarge their service industry and management departments. It might be claimed that the zeitgeist leader can predict this change and s/he can reshape the health and education organizations according to new circumstances.

In relation to the decision making it might be claimed that responsible leader is one of the suitable types of leadership in public sector. Because, decisions of responsible leaders do not only reflect the workers' point of view but it also reflects all the stakeholders' approaches. As Kim (2015) demonstrates that employees job satisfaction is likely to increase if they believe that their manager includes them in decision making. Consequently, performance of these workers increase. Furthermore, as being a responsible leader, the chief executive of the health organization does not only consider doctors and nurses' opinions but s/he also considers how his/her decision affects the patients, health insurance companies and pharmacy industry. Involving the opinion of workers and stakeholders in decision making is possible to increase not only the satisfaction of workers but also the satisfaction of the clients and other stakeholders. Due to this satisfaction, it might be claimed that the commitment of the workers and other stakeholders to the organization tend to increase.

It is worth mentioning that zeitgeist leadership and responsible leadership have been discussed theoretically and there are several empirical papers look at this issue in private sector. However, to the best of my knowledge, I have not seen any empirical paper that scrutinizes the impact of zeitgeist and responsible leadership on the public sector organizations. However, not having empirical result in public sector does not necessarily mean that there are no zeitgeist or responsible leaders in public sector. It is important to highlight that this is one of the gaps that needs to be studied.

4. Leaders Who Are Self-Interested and Their Decision-Making

Politically intelligent leaders and charismatic leaders are quite different from the types of leaders that has been mentioned in this paper. To be more specific, these two types of leader do not necessarily take the view of workforce or the view of the stakeholders into consideration in decision making but they put emphasis on their ideas and they believe that they make a right decision by this way.

4.1 Politically Intelligent Leaders and Decision-Making

The seminal paper of Kramer (2006) sheds light on the characteristics of a politically intelligent leader. He argues that even though the politically intelligent leaders are personally over-self-confidence, strict and angry, they have an ability to observe what the strength and weaknesses of the workforce. However, it might be claimed that being able to realize the strength and weaknesses of the workforce is not special to them, as it is evident that almost all types of leaders are likely to acknowledge the characteristics of their workers. As Kramer (2006) argues what is new with this type of leadership is that the way how they act in decision making. He claims that "politically intelligent leaders use intimidation and hard power to exploit the anxiety and vulnerability they detect" (Kramer (2006: 91). Relying on this statement, it may not be too far to claim that regarding decision making, politically

intelligent leaders takes the strength and weaknesses of the workforce into consideration but may not consider ethics that much.

4.2 Charismatic Leaders and Decision-Making

Nadler and Tushman (1994) claim that charismatic leaders have three fundamental features which are envisioning, energizing and enabling. The fundamental determinants of the former feature are articulating a compelling vision, setting high expectations and modelling consistent behaviours, the determinant features of the middle one are demonstrating personal excitement, expressing personal confidence and seeking, finding and using success, and the determinants of the latter features are expressing personal support, empathizing, and expressing confidence in people (Nadler and Tushman, 1994). Relying on this, it can be asserted that charismatic leaders are likely to set the goal of the organization individually. In terms of decision making, although they set the goal of organization individually, they always provide support to their workers. As it is claimed “the charismatic leader tends to express his/her confidence in people’s ability to perform effectively and meet challenge” (Nadler and Tushman, 1994: 282).

4.3 Effects On Public Services

There has not been an agreement on the issue of whether politically intelligent leaders and charismatic leaders have a positive impact on the productivity of workforce of the organization. On one hand, Kramer (2006) argues that both politically intelligent leaders and charismatic leaders usually increase the productivity of the organizations. On the other hand, Khurana (2002: 64) claims that “organizations that depend on succession of charismatic leader are essentially relying on luck”. It is important to highlight that both types of leaders mainly rely on their own judgment in decision making and generally neglect the view of workforce or other stakeholders.

As Şahin et al., (2016) effectively argue that, decision making in public sector should be decentralized. In other words, leaders in public sector should not solely put emphasis on their ideas, but they should take the ideas of their employees and ideas of other stakeholders into consideration. Looking more deeply into the issue, because of neglecting the ideas of workforce in decision making, politically intelligent leaders might deteriorate the commitment of the workers to the organization. Although, they can realize the strength and weaknesses of their workforce, they might push them to perform more than their capacity. From this point of view, it might be claimed that neglecting the view of the workers of public services is quite a substantial issue that needs to be considered. As it is well-known, majority of the workforce of the public services consist of professionals such as; doctors and semi-professionals, such as teachers and nurses. Taking the power of the professionals in health and education organizations into account, it is almost impossible to implement any policy which is not agreed by professionals. The reason for that is because, if they resist the policy, using their unionized powers, they might give a hard time to the chief executive of the organization. Otherwise, if they are compelled to do what they have been told, under this circumstance, they are likely to perform poorly. In either situation, commitment of the public-sector workers to the organization is likely to decrease.

Taking the charismatic leader into consideration, it might be claimed owing to not including the ideas of the workers in decision making; the charismatic leaders are likely to have no effect on the performance of employees in public service organizations. Although there have been some empirical findings claiming that there is a relation between charismatic leadership and unit performance in private sector, such correlation has not been found in public sector. For instance, Javidan and Waldman (2003: 229) analyse whether charismatic leadership and its consequences are relevant in the public sector. Their findings show that charismatic leadership is not significantly related to the unit performance in Canadian public sector. Furthermore, Arabacı et al., (2014) approach the issue from a different perspective and analyse the relationship between charismatic leadership characteristics of principals and organizational commitment of teachers, in Turkey. Their findings indicate that there is a trivial correlation between charismatic leadership and organizational commitment of teachers.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, regarding decision making, this paper demonstrates that leaders are likely to use different instruments to manage organizations, some of them, such as ethical, transformational and

authentic leaders use ethical values, others such as responsible, and zeitgeist leaders take the stakeholders and contextual factors into consideration, whereas charismatic and politically intelligent leaders neglect both and primarily relies on their own knowledge. It might be claimed that, because different types of leader consider different principles and factors in decision making, their impact on the organization of public sector is likely to become diverse as well. This means that the way how the decision is being made has a considerable impact not only on current but also on future status of the organization. In more detail, commitment of the employees and stakeholders of the public-sector organization might be diverse as the type of leadership in that organization differs.

To recap, regarding decision making issue, it might be claimed that, the leaders who consider the ethical values and stakeholders view are likely to increase the reliability of the public service organizations, the commitment of the workers and stakeholders of the public-sector organizations. In addition, the leaders who consider the contextual factors might reshape the public service organization according to future needs. However, leaders who neglect these factors and only relies on her/his personal knowledge such as politically intelligent and charismatic leaders are likely to have a negative impact on public service organizations.

To conclude, in terms of decision making, ethical, authentic, zeitgeist, responsible leaders likely to have a positive, while politically intelligent and charismatic leaders are likely to have a negative effect on public services.

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