A Study on Employees’ Attitudes towards Transformational Leadership and Organizational Attachment

Ercan YAVUZ
Dumlupınar Üniversitesi
eyyavuz@gmail.com

Introduction

The concept of transformational leadership was first used by political scientist Burns in 1978 during political leadership education (Owen et. al. 2007, s.317). According to Burns, “transformational leadership takes place when one or more people are engaged in a relationship where they encourage their followers or each other to higher motivation and better ethical behaviour.” The transformational leader educates the employees through respecting them and giving them responsibilities (Bass and Avolio, 1993, s. 51).

The sustainability of an organization depends on the most important source of the organization: human. What makes an organization competitive, powerful and continuous is the quality of its employees. Hence, qualified employees should remain within the organization, attached to it and adopt the goals of the organization thus achieve the awareness that he is a citizen of the organization. Organizational attachment is the adoption of organizational goals and values by its members, employees’ efforts to become an important member of the organization considering the organization as a family and seeing himself as a family member (Özdevecioğlu, 2003, s.114). Some of the researches that aim at determining the factors which effect organizational attachment take leadership behaviour as an organizational and administrative factor (Çetin, 2004, s.99). Some researchers pointed out that the organizational attachment of employees was affected by the applications and behaviour of the leader. The employee who thinks that he is not supported by the organization, thus the leader, displays lower attachment towards the organization (Dick and Metcalfe, 2001, s.115; Zangora, 2001, s. 16).

It has been determined that transformational leaders, compared to other leadership behaviours, provide employees with more satisfaction, motivation, attachment and higher performance. It has been observed that employees have a higher level of respect for the leader in organizations with transformational leaders. Leaders render their followers more efficient and prepare an environment for them to present high level performance with transformational leadership behaviour (Keegan and Hartog, 2004, s.610).
Transformational leaders make their followers forget past routines, and help them in developing new solutions for confusing problems and adapting to new environments. Transformational leadership is indicated to be effective on organizational behaviour in this context (Nemanich and Keller, 2007, s.50). The role of transformational leaders on the followers within the organization might be asserted as contributing to the development of the followers in the organization and in a way reconstruction of their identities. The transformational leader shares the mission and organizational aims of the organization with his followers and in the end attaches the employee to the organization to complete the transformation. After such attachment the employee exerts all his efforts and increases his performance (Epitropaki and Martin, 2005, s.572). The transformational leader, beyond completing a determined task in the organization, emphasizes transformation in the organization and develops a common vision to attain attachment of the followers to the organization and conveys the common vision to the members of the organization and determines the common values of the organization (Todd, 1999, s.5).

Material and Method

The research universe of this study encompasses employees who work for four and five star hotels and holiday resorts in Antalya, Aydın and Muğla provinces. According to Ministry of Tourism data pertaining to 2006 the total number of rooms in the enterprises in Antalya, Muğla and Aydın is 149,601. The research universe is (N=120,272). The sampling calculated making use of the universe is 598 (Yamane, 2001, s.116–117). Two different scales have been reviewed and used. The first one is the “Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)” developed by Bass and Avolio. MLQ leadership scale has been developed by the researchers’ application in several countries and organizations (Tracey and Hinkin, 1998, s.220). The second is the organizational commitment scale developed by Allen and Meyer (Meyer and Allen, 1997). The database of the study comprises 678 valid questionnaires.

Findings

The leadership process occurs either in relation to situational leadership theory or transformational leadership theory. In the organizations where the research was carried out, the employees believe that their leader displays high level of (3.49) transformational leadership behaviour. The organizational attachment of the employees that participated in the research was evaluated as medium scale (3.22). A significant difference is observed between age groups and organizational attachment. The age group of the employees does not affect their attitudes towards organizational leadership. The organizational leadership perceptions of 18 years old employees and 35 years old employees are not different. It has been observed that working period represents a significant difference in organizational attachment. Employees perception of transformational leadership behaviour was high.

A significant difference has been observed between the gender of the employees and their attitudes towards transformational leadership behaviour. Women have a higher perception of transformational leadership behaviour compared to men. The gender of the employee is not an important factor for determining the attitude towards leadership behaviours. There is a significant difference between the level of education and organizational attachment of the employees. Organizational attachment of the employees decreases with increasing level of education.
Conclusion

Research findings suggest that the organizational attachment of the employees is at the medium level. Employees believe that their leader displays a high level of transformational leadership behaviour. High levels of charisma and intellectual stimulation, as characteristics of transformational leadership, averages compared to other characteristics suggest that leaders have charismatic leadership behaviour and they value development of new ideas by the followers.

As a result of the study, it has been determined that transformational leadership behaviour exists in the organizations studied and the employees shape their attitudes accordingly. Supporting transformational leadership behaviour is important for raising organizational attachment from medium to high levels. Charismatic leadership and intellectual stimulation skills of the leader should be foregrounded while supporting transformational leadership behaviour. The working period of the employee should be protracted in order to increase organizational attachment. Organizational attachments of middle-aged and above employees are high. However, 76.3% of the employees working at the enterprises are young. Organizational attachment increases with time spent within the organization. The rate of employees working for the enterprise less than 5 years was determined as 66.1% for the enterprises where the research was carried out. Thus, it is necessary for the enterprises to revise their employee policies. Enterprises should also consider these issues along with employing transformational leaders for increasing organizational attachment.