

Employees' Unethical Prosocial Organizational Behavior as an Outcome of Managers' Democratic, Autocratic, and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles: A Study on the Turkish Tourism Sector

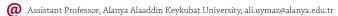
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Abstract: This study examines the relationships democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles have on unethical prosocial organizational behaviors (UPB). The research is designed in accordance with the causal-comparative method. Affective commitment is defined in the research model as the mediating variable with normative commitment, continuous commitment, and performance bonus as the moderating variables. The research data have been collected from hotel employees (n = 362) who are directly in contact with customers. The analyses have been performed using SmartPLS 3.9. According to the results, no relationships have been found for democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles with UPB. The mediating variable of affective commitment has been found to have no significant effect on the relationship between leadership styles and UPB. The independent variable of normative commitment has been found to be positively correlated with UPB at a significance level of p < 0.05. However, it was not found to have any moderating effect as a moderating variable on the relationship between leadership styles and UPB. No significant relationship has been found for continuance commitment either as an independent variable or as a moderating variable. Meanwhile, performance bonus, which is another mediating variable, has been found to generate a significant difference at the level of p = .000 between employees who receive bonuses and those who do not in terms of the relationship between normative commitment and UPB.

Keywords: Leadership, Organizational commitment, Unethical prosocial organizational behaviors, Unethical behaviors, Performance management, Bonus plan

Summary

In the 1980s, management desired and supported positive employee behaviors due to their contribution to organizational performance (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991). Research results (Warren, 2003; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005) have indicated employees to display extra-role behaviors not in compliance with work ethics. Studies conducted after 2010 have also revealed some dark aspects of em-





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ployees' positive behaviors to contribute to organizational performance. For example, employees may also have behaviors that appear well-intentioned and contribute to organizational performance but harm third parties (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Umphress et al. (2010) defined such behaviors that violate moral values, social norms, and laws in support of organizational performance or an organization's members as unethical prosocial organizational behavior (UPB).

According to Tekarslan (2004), a manager can use many leadership styles simultaneously. A manager can show different leadership styles with regard to different subjects or toward different subordinates. UPB research is often conducted over a single leadership style (Miao, Newman, Yu, & Xu, 2013; Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014; Zou, Titan, & Liu, 2015). This study accepts managers as being able to display different leadership styles simultaneously and has been designed to examine the relationship managers' democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles (i.e., the most fundamental variations in leadership styles) have with employees' UPB.

Being a powerful variable, leadership can directly affect other variables, as well as have increased influence through mediating variables. (Haque, Fernando, & Caputi, 2019; Asif, Qing, Hwang, & Shi, 2019). Leadership is defined as an important factor in developing organizational commitment (Jackson, Meyer, & Wang, 2013). Studies have indicated leadership and affective commitment to have a positive effect on UPB (Matherne & Litchfield, 2012; Coşkun & Ülgen, 2017). However, the relationships that normative and continuance commitments have with UPB have yet to be examined. Bryant and Merritt (2018) emphasized unethical behavior to be able to emerge as a norm. Normative commitment is taught in the family and school as a part of the socialization process. An employee with normative commitment may feel the obligation to serve the success and continuity of the organization as a moral principle (Dwahan & Mulla, 2012; Markovits, 2011). Therefore, normative commitment has been included in the research model as a moderating variable.

Lee et al. (2019) found a positive relationship to exist between tenure and UPB, while Kalshoven, Dijk, and Boon (2016) found this relationship to be negative. Continuance commitment may develop with regard to company tenure. For this reason, continuance commitment has also been included in the research model as a moderating variable.

One of the limitations of UPB is employee behaviors that produce self-serving results are not evaluated within the scope of UPB. Performance-based bonus systems are widely used in the tourism sector, and employees in some cases may

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display behaviors similar to UPB to get a bonus. Consequently, performance bonuses have been included in the research model as a moderating variable in order to determine whether or not employee behavior falls within the scope of UPB.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

In 1939, Kurt Lewin (1997) conducted some experiments to examine the effects authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles have on group behavior. With this study, Lewin identified democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles as making up basic leadership styles, and since then these have been studied and described.

As in many other sectors, leadership is an important factor in the tourism sector. Research results indicate managers' leadership styles to affect employees' behaviors toward customers (Boukis, Koritos, Daunt, & Papastathopoulos, 2020). Managers can simultaneously show different leadership styles that are able to affect UPB.

Hypothesis H_{1a} : A relationship exists between managers' democratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis H_{1b} : A relationship exists between managers' autocratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis H_{1c}: A relationship exists between managers' laissez-faire leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

The different types and levels of organizational commitment affect employee behavior (Turnipseed, 2002). Affective commitment has been examined as a single factor in UPB studies, with some studies indicating it to have a positive relationship (Matherne & Litchfield, 2012) and others finding no relationship (Lee, Schwarz, Newman, & Legood, 2019).

Hypothesis H_{2a}: Subordinates' affective commitment has a mediating effect on the relationship between managers' democratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis $\mathbf{H_{2b}}$: Subordinates' affective commitment has a mediating effect on the relationship between managers' autocratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis H_{2c}: Subordinates' affective commitment has a mediating effect on the relationship between manager's laissez-faire leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Wiener (1982) defined normative commitment as the sense of responsibility felt toward an organization and as something individuals gain in the family and at school during the socialization process that becomes active with membership in an organization. An individual's sense of responsibility toward an organization results in behaviors such as being loyal and being ready to make sacrifices for the organization to help it achieve its goals (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Individuals feel responsible for the success and continuity of an organization (Dwahan & Mulla, 2012). Individuals come to an organization possessing normative commitment, which is partially independent of the manager's leadership style. Thus, it has been included as a moderating variable in the research model.

Hypothesis H₃: A relationship exists between subordinates' normative commitment and UPB.

Hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{4a} : Subordinates' normative commitment has a moderating effect on the relationship between managers' democratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{4b} : Subordinates' normative commitment has a moderating effect on the relationship between managers' autocratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis H_{4c}: Subordinate's normative commitment has a moderating effect on the relationship between the manager's laissez-faire leadership style and the subordinate's UPB.

Hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{4d} : Subordinates' normative commitment has a regulating effect between subordinates' affective commitment and UPB.

According to Becker (1960), at the time of decision making, employees consider the consequences options have and which situations will benefit them and arrange their relationship with their organization. Lee et al. (2019) found a positive relationship to exist between company tenure and UPB, while Kalshoven, Dijk, and Boon (2016) found a negative relationship for this. Meyer and Allen (1990) examined continuance commitment as two variables (i.e., vested rights based on seniority and lack of job opportunities outside the organization). While continuance commitment improves with organizational tenure, a relationship is predicted to likely exist between continuance commitment and UPB. Continuance commitment has been defined as a moderating variable in the current research model.

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Hypothesis H₅: A relationship exists between subordinates' continuance commitment and UPB.

Hypothesis H_{6a}: Subordinates' continuance commitment has a moderating effect on the relationship between managers' democratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis H_{6b} : Subordinates' continuance commitment has a moderating effect on the relationship between managers' autocratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis H_{6c}: Subordinates' continuance commitment has a moderating effect on the relationship between the manager's laissez-faire leadership style and the subordinate's UPB.

Hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{6d} : Subordinates' continuance commitment has a regulating effect between subordinates' affective commitment and UPB.

Performance management systems have three goals: to manage organizational performance, manage employee performance, and match organizational goals with employee performance (Williams, 1998).

Employee behavior that aims at increasing organizational performance also improves the departmental performance and other employees' performance. Employees can benefit directly or indirectly from these results. For a behavior to be considered within the scope of UPB, the employee must not act in their self-interest (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Performance bonuses have been included in the study as a moderating variable in order to determine the difference between those who receive a bonus and those who don't as well as the goal of employees' behavior. Employee behavior that serves self-interests should not be counted even if it resembles UPB.

Hypothesis H_{7a} : Performance bonuses have a moderating effect on the relationship between managers' democratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{7b} : Performance bonuses have a moderating effect on the relationship between managers' autocratic leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{7c} : Performance bonuses have a moderating effect on the relationship between managers' laissez-faire leadership style and subordinates' UPB.

Hypothesis H_{7d} : Performance bonuses have a regulating effect on the relationship between employees' affective commitment and UPB.

Hypothesis H_{7e} : Performance bonuses have a regulating effect on the relationship between employees' normative commitment and UPB.

Hypothesis H₇₆: Performance bonuses have a regulating effect on the relationship between employees' continuance commitment and UPB.

Method

The study has been designed with respect to the causal-comparative screening model (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2015).

Sample

The research sample has been determined using the bias sampling method. Data have been collected from the tour operators, transfer staff, receptionists, bartenders, waiters, and in-hotel store employees who have direct contact with customers at five-star hotels located in the Alanya District of the province of Antalya. The data were collected face-to-face from 362 tourism sector employees by 10 assistant students using a simple random sampling method in June 2019. The minimum sample size for analyzing a partial-least-squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) is recommended to be at least 10 times the amount of internal and external latent variables in the research model (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012; Kock, 2018; Nadya, 2018). Twenty-four participants were excluded from the analysis for reasons such as leaving demographic information blank or marking the same option for all items. Of the participants, 218 are men and 120 are women. Their average age is 31. For educational status, 106 have undergraduate degrees, 28 have associate degrees, 151 have high school diplomas, and 53 have finished middle school. The participants' average work experience is 5 years and average company tenure is 1.8 years. Of the participants, 117 are given performance bonuses in addition to their salary, and 221 just receive a salary.

Measuring the Variables

Managers' leadership styles have been measured using the Leadership Styles Scale developed by Clark (2007) and adapted to Turkish by Yörük et al. (2011). Organizational commitment has been measured using the Organizational Commitment Scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) and adapted to Turkish by Kaya and Selçuk (2007). UPB has been measured with the Unethical Pro-Social Organizational Behavior Scale developed by Umphress et al. (2010) and adapted to Turkish by Baba (2020). Scale items are measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale

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(1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree). The presence of a performance bonus was asked as a yes/no question, while bonus calculations and payment systems were not queried.

Data Analysis

The analyses were made using the program SmartPLS 3.9. Statistical significance has been accepted at the level of p < 0.05 in the analyses.

Findings

According to the analysis results, hypotheses $\mathbf{H_{1a}}$ through $\mathbf{H_{2c}}$ and $\mathbf{H_{5}}$ are not supported. In other words, no relationship has been determined for managers' democratic, authoritarian, or laissez-faire leadership styles with their employees' UPB.

A positive relationship was found between normative commitment (defined as both an independent and moderating variable) and UPB; thus, the research results support hypothesis \mathbf{H}_3 . Employees' normative commitment as an independent variable strengthens their UPB (t = 4.221, p = 0.000).

A positive relationship has been found for continuance commitment as an independent variable with UPB at a significance level of p = 0.10. However, because the research has identified significance levels as p < 0.05 within the scope of the research, the result is not considered significant. At the same time, the moderating effect of continuance commitment on the relationship between the managers' leadership styles and employees' UPB was indeterminate.

An analysis of moderating effects has been conducted to determine the effect normative and continuance commitments have as moderating variables. According to the analysis results, no moderating effect for normative or continuance commitment was detected in the relationship between managers' leadership styles and employees' UPB; thus, hypotheses $\mathbf{H_{4a}}$ through $\mathbf{H_{4d}}$ and $\mathbf{H_{6a}}$ through $\mathbf{H_{6d}}$ are not supported.

A comparative analysis has also been performed regarding employees who receive a performance bonus and those who do not. According to the results, a significant difference exists between those who receive a performance bonus and those who do not in terms of the relationship between normative commitment and UPB (t = 2.231, p = 0.026). Thus, hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{7e} is supported, while hypotheses \mathbf{H}_{7a} through \mathbf{H}_{7d} and hypothesis \mathbf{H}_{7e} are not.

The relationships affective (t = 2.064, p = 0.039), normative (t = 2.463, p = 0.014), and continuance (t = 2.760, p = 0.000) commitments have with UPB for employees who do not receive a performance bonus are all significant.

Conclusion and Discussion

The research results show no relationship to exist for managers' democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire leadership styles with employees' UPB. No mediating effect has been detected for affective commitment (as a mediating variable) in the research model on the relationship between leadership styles and UPB at all participant levels.

A significant negative relationship has been found between affective commitment and UPB for employees who do not receive a performance bonus. This result does not coincide with the results of previous studies that have found a positive relationship (Matherne & Litchfield, 2012) or no relationship (Lee, Schwarz, Newman, & Legood, 2019) to exist. According to the current research results, affective commitment weakens UPB for employees who don't receive a performance bonus.

In the research model, a positive relationship has been found between normative commitment (both as an independent and as a moderating variable). Employees with high normative commitment can be said to tend toward UPB. This result supports Bryant and Merritt's (2018) prediction that unethical behavior may emerge as the norm.

The strongest positive relationship between UPB and normative commitment has been identified for employees regardless of whether they receive a performance bonus or not. Employees with high normative commitment can be said to view UPB as the norm. Attitudes that have transformed into basic personality traits such as passion for working and being results-oriented have been indicated to have a positive effect on UPB (Kong, 2016). Normative commitment, which forms prior to organizational membership, can also be considered within the scope of basic personality traits.

For employees who do not receive a performance bonus, a positive relationship exists between continuance commitment and UPB. This result is consistent with the continuance commitment literature. Employees who possess continuance commitment exhibit UPB in order not to lose their job and to protect the company (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This result coincides with the results of the positive relationship between tenure and UPB as shown in the study conducted by Lee et al. (2019) and Kalshoven, Dijk, & Boon (2016).

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