The Effect of Servant Leadership on Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Study in Five Star Hotel Enterprises in İstanbul and Afyonkarahisar

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Extensive Summary

Hotel enterprises indicate unique features with their distinctive business activities. The main reason for the uniqueness of hotel enterprises is intangibility. Service quality is the main determinant of customer satisfaction in hotel enterprises which produce service. Service quality is the perception of employee’s performance by the customer. Therefore, human resources is critical in hotels. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), defined as employees’ indication of extra volunteer behaviour beyond their specified role, is important for the provision of services in hotels and fulfillment of quality standards. Because, meeting the customer needs as soon as possible in hotel enterprises can only be made possible by employees who take initiative and perform behaviour beyond their defined job descriptions.

One of the determinants affecting OCB, expressed in different terms such as extra-role behavior, voluntary behavior and good soldier syndrome, is leader behavior. Because, with their personalities, behaviors, decisions and practices, the leaders of the organization directly affect the employees' attitudes and behaviors against the organization. As servant leadership (SL) and OCB approaches based on the basis of voluntary behavior and the similarity of their basic objectives make these two closely related concepts. This indicates more importance in tourism enterprises which are labor-intensive and produce services. Because emotions and feelings of employee are directly reflected to their performance during employee customer interaction, it affects the quality of services provided and customer satisfaction. For this reason, there is a need for employees who indicate volunteer role behavior beyond their specified role definition for the organization. It is assumed that, features of servant leaders such as
listening, empathy, persuasion and service will affect OCB identified as the voluntary extra-role behavior of employees.

In this context, identification of the impact of SL qualities of managers in hotels on the employees’ OCB constitutes the main purpose of the study. Since this is the first study related to hotel enterprises, it is expected to provide useful information and contribution to the literature and industry representatives.

In the scope of the research, the data was obtained from 513 employees in Istanbul and Afyonkarahisar in 2013 by employing questionnaire techniques. The questionnaire used within the scope of the study consists of three parts. In the first part of the survey, descriptive questions about the demographic characteristics of employees were asked. In the second and third sections, the questions aimed at measuring employees’ perception levels of SL and OCB were asked. The questions for the purpose of measuring SL and OCB perception levels were prepared at five-point Likert scale.

Mean and standart deviations are calculated to describe the opinions of workers about SL and OCB. On the other hand to determine the relation between SL and OCB Pearson correlation analyze is applied. To determine the causal relationship between variables linear regression analysis applied. To test the structural reliability of the scales of SL and OCB factor analysis is applied and Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients are calculated. It’s seen that all of these coefficients are over 0.70.

As a result of data analysis, a moderate positive relationship between SL and OCB was detected. In this context, it is found that while empowerment, vision and trust behaviors influence employees’ OCB positively, no positive impact of agapao love and altruism behavior on OCB was detected. It is seen that, the perceptions of employees on the trust which is one of sub-dimensions of SL and the level of OCB perceptions in Istanbul is more positive than employees in Afyonkarahisar. In addition, while a significant difference is identified in employees’ SL perceptions according to their education levels, no significant difference was observed in consideration with their other individual characteristics. The results obtained within the scope of this research shows similarities with the studies in the literature. In many studies, trust between the leader and employee in particular is found effective in employees’ indication of OCB.

Research results reveals that hotel managers should build their relationships with their employees on fairness and openness. This, in particular, is the main determinant in trusting employees’ leaders or managers. Another aspect which hotel leaders or managers should pay attention to is the need for empowerment of employees because of the nature of the business. Simultaneous production and consumption in hotels forces employees to take initiative.

As OCB contains extra role behavior, which are not in employees’ description of work, an employee exhibits this behavior only if he or she feels free to perform this behavior. This will provide employee ability to move to maintain customer satisfaction. The high level SL perceptions of university graduates compared to other educational groups indicate that the meaning of several SL behavior performed is discrete (i.e. agapao love). This is one of the results of this study which will be beneficial to management teams of tourism enterprises in employee recruitment.

Although theoretical studies on relationship between SL and OCB exists, there are no studies in the field of application. Although the application area of this study is,
tourism industry, important, the research is limited to 513 employees in five-star hotels in Afyonkarahisar and Istanbul. In subsequent studies, employee perceptions of SL and its impact on OCB in different types of tourism enterprises (three and four star hotels, travel agencies, food and beverage enterprises etc.) can be researched. Thus, significant contributions will be made in disclosing the subject in the tourism industry, providing contribution to the relevant literature and to the industry.