Strategic Leadership: Best Practical Leadership Style to Business Strategies in the Period of Covid-19 Epidemic

Stratejik Liderlik: Koronavirüs Salgın Döneminde İşletmelere En Uygun Liderlik Tipi

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Abstract: The number of new leadership theories that are labelled is increasing day by day. This increase is depending on continuous change in environmental conditions. A variable of fluctuations on business environment increases the need for new leadership styles that can effectively respond to the needs of the change in business processes and cope with uncertainty. One of the new leadership styles that can develop strategies successfully in a rapidly changing environment is the strategic leadership. Strategic leaders have the power to influence all followers of the business by successfully implementing of strategic management tools to organizational processes. Strategic leaders are the people who can improve the firm's and their followers' performance by increasing dedication to the business objectives. To sum, strategic leaders differ from other types of leaders since they have the ability to cope with uncertainty and to envision the future of organizations. In this period of Covid- 19 Epidemic, everyone is going through extraordinary days in globally. To manage successfully strategies of businesses regarding the changing conditions and uncertainties on business environment and to motivate the enterprises that could bring social and innovative solutions to the problems caused by the Covid-19 Epidemic are so crucial. There are two options for leaders in this period: Either managing the uncertainties about the business successfully with the help of a vision developed with a solution-oriented vision and common sense or losing the balance in the face of uncertainties by performing an unsuccessful leadership practices. Leadership has a great importance not only on strategic decisions but also on whole organizational decisions. In this study, after giving some brief information about strategic leadership style and discussing its differences among any other leadership styles; how will legendary strategic leadership skills be effective on the business strategies on the period of Covid-19 Epidemic will be discussed. The scope of this study denotes the argument that strategic leadership style is the best fitted and practical to up-to-date business environment under the sway of Covid-19 Epidemic. Besides, this study indicates strategic leadership has a vital stature on alleviating the negative impacts of the changing organizational facilities due to Covid-19 Epidemic as well. This study will provide significant contributions and prominent insights to the academic literature and businesses and industries regarding debates and suggestions about strategic leadership stated in the study.

Structured Abstract: Coronavirus epidemic has mostly affected the global economy and all kind of businesses. By Covid-19 epidemic, economic conditions, trading conditions and organizational needs has been all changed. Businesses require new strategies, scenarios and leadership styles to overcome uncertainty in

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business environment that Covid-19 epidemic has brought. The number of new leadership theories that are labelled is increasing day by day. This increase is depending on continuous change in environmental conditions. A variable of fluctuations on business environment increases the need for new leadership styles that can effectively respond to the needs of the change in business processes and cope with uncertainty. One of the new leadership styles that can develop strategies successfully in a rapidly changing environment is the strategic leadership. Strategic leaders have the power to influence all followers of the business by successfully implementing of strategic management tools to organizational processes. Strategic leaders are the people who can improve the firm's and their followers' performance by increasing dedication to the business objectives. To sum, strategic leaders differ from other types of leaders since they have the ability to cope with uncertainty and to envision the future of organizations. In this period of COVID- 19 Epidemic, everyone is going through extraordinary days in globally. To manage successfully strategies of businesses regarding the changing conditions and uncertainties on business environment and to motivate the enterprises that could bring social and innovative solutions to the problems caused by the COVID-19 Epidemic are so crucial. There are two options for leaders in this period: Either managing the uncertainties about the business successfully with the help of a vision developed with a solution-oriented vision and common sense or loosing the balance in the face of uncertainties by performing an unsuccessful leadership practices. Leadership has a great importance not only on strategic decisions but also on whole organizational decisions. Working with a strategic leader is an uplifting experience for its followers. The strategic leaders change all strategic issues from soup to nuts in businesses and set aside outdated (expired) strategies. They care about you and want you to succeed. There are many things to do to protect businesses from the negative effects of the COVID-19 Epidemic. First of all, it is essential to give up classical management tools and to perform a motivating strategic leadership skills to the followers. In this COVID-19 Epidemic period, the controller and strict management style like in classical managerial methods should have to been avoided. Instead, the management mechanism should be stretched in order to make the followers feel more comfortable in inconvenient conditions such as working online at home, communicating with people regarding social distance, renewed supply chain management from a to izzard, new customer management systems. Adapting to similar business processes to this new business environment forces leaders to admit followers as individuals before than employees by moving away from leaders' customarily autocratic style. Strategic leaders must adopt a leadership style to up-to-date leadership styles. Strategic leaders expect followers to come up with innovative solutions to problems that arise in uncertain conditions, such as COVID-19 Epidemic conditions. Adaptation to this new situation increases the number of errors in followers' work. Strategic leaders should be more tolerant of these mistakes made by their followers during this period and should not lose their trust to their followers that they can improve themselves continuously. The important thing is that a strategic leader is not just developing strong strategies in the challenging COVID-19 Epidemic period but also in line with a successful vision; strategic leaders are the people who can ensure that these visions and strategies to be adopted and accepted by the whole human resource in their businesses. This is the main leadership skills of strategic leaders that distinguishes them from managers and any other leaders. In this study, after giving some brief information about strategic leadership style and discussing its differences among any other leadership styles; how will legendary strategic leadership skills be effective on the business strategies on the period of COVID-19 Epidemic will be discussed. The scope of this study denotes the argument that strategic leadership style is the best fitted and practical to up-to-date business environment under the sway of COVID-19 Epidemic. Besides, this study indicates strategic leadership has a vital stature on alleviating the negative impacts of the changing organizational facilities due to COVID-19 Epidemic as well. This study will provide significant contributions and prominent insights to the academic literature and businesses and industries regarding debates and suggestions about strategic leadership stated in the study.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Covid-19, Epidemic, Business Strategies, Leaderhip Style

Öz: Yeni liderlik teorilerinin sayısı gün geçtikçe artmaktadır. Bu artış çevresel koşullardaki sürekli değişime bağlıdır. İş ortamındaki dinamiklerde dalgalanmalar ve değişkenlikler, iş süreçlerindeki değişimin ihtiyaçlarına etkili bir şekilde cevap verebilecek ve belirsizlikle baş edebilecek yeni liderlik stillerine olan ihtiyacı artırmaktadır. Hızla değişen iş çevresinde başarılı bir şekilde strateji geliştirebilen yeni liderlik stillerinden biri ise stratejik liderliktir. Stratejik liderler, stratejik yönetim araçlarını kurumsal süreçlere başarıyla uygulayarak işletmenin tüm takipçilerini etkileme gücüne sahiptir. Stratejik liderler, işletme hedeflerine olan bağlılığı ve adanmışlığı artırarak firmanın ve çalışanların performansını artırabilecek kişilerdir. Özetle, stratejik liderler

diğer lider tiplerinden farklıdır çünkü belirsizlikle başa çıkabilme ve işletmelerin geleceğini öngörebilme yeteneğine sahiptirler. Koronavirüs Salgını döneminde, herkes küresel olarak olağanüstü günlerden geçmektedir. İşletmelerin iş ortamındaki değişen koşullar ve belirsizlikler ile ilgili başarılı stratejilerini yönetmek ve Koronavirüs salgınının neden olduğu sorunlara sosyal ve yenilikçi çözümler getirebilecek girişimleri motive etmek çok önemlidir. Bu dönemde liderler için iki seçenek vardır: Çözüm odaklı bir vizyon ve sağduyu ile geliştirilen bir vizyon yardımıyla iş ortamındaki belirsizlikleri başarılı bir şekilde yönetmek veya başarısız liderlik uygulamaları gerçekleştirerek belirsizlikler karşısında işletmenin var olan dengesini bozmak. Liderlik sadece stratejik kararlar için değil, tüm organizasyonel kararlar için de büyük bir öneme sahiptir. Bu çalışmada stratejik liderlik stili hakkında bilgi verildikten ve diğer liderlik stillerinden farkı tartışıldıktan sonra; stratejik liderlik becerilerinin Koronavirüs salgın döneminde iş stratejileri üzerinde nasıl olumlu bir etki bırakacağı tartışılacaktır. Bu çalışmanın kapsamı, stratejik liderlik tarzının Koronavirüs salgınının etkisi altındaki işletmelerde uygulanabilecek salgın dönemi iş ortamına en uygun liderlik tipi olduğunu iş dünyası temsilcilerine aktarmaktır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, stratejik liderliğin Koronavirüs salgını nedeniyle değişen organizasyonel çevrede olumsuz etkilerini hafifletmede hayati önem taşıdığını göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada yer verilen stratejik liderlik hakkındaki tartışmalar ve öneriler; ilgili akademik literatüre, günümüz iş dünyası temsilcilerine, işletmelere, endüstrilere ve yeni girişimlere önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Stratejik Liderlik, Koronavirüs, Salgın, İşletme Stratejileri, Liderlik Tarzı

Introduction

Management and Leadership

The emergence of the most effective organizational activities in a business depends on vigorous leaders and strong management. Businesses that are influenced by the ever-changing and evolving environmental dynamics today owe their success to giving leaders priority in non-routine facilities and nonordinary businesses (Psychogios and Garev, 2012), having an innovative vision and inspiring their followers in line with this vision (Zaccaro and Banks, 2001). Businesses need managers who will plan detailed business schemes and effective organizational structures and follow and direct daily operations (Bitran and Caldenty, 2003). However, these managers, who do not have an innovative vision and do not have the power of influence and motivation on their followers (Kark and Van Dijk, 2007) are unlikely to develop strategies that will keep the companies strong in an increasingly competitive environment. Furthermore, they keep the company sustainable in this competitive environment. The existence of leaders with this vision and foresight will provide the advantage of planning and implementing strategies that will ensure the sustainability (Crews, 2010) of their leaders in businesses. This will open the way for companies to achieve superior success by making a difference from their competitors.

A very familiar debate after the concept of leadership is put forward: the discussion that leadership is not a retroactive concept but with birth (Pfeffer, 1977). A general view argues that leaders are born as leaders. According to this argument, leaders have their own personal characteristics, behavior and attitudes that allow them to dominate themselves in many different occasions (Marques, 2010). This view argues that leadership would have been taught to every person having effective leadership traits if these personal traits could be resolved, but this is not possible (Rowley, 1997). So, if it were not born with leadership skills, every individual who desires to be a leader could be taught with the help of programs to develop a certain set of behavioral leadership patterns.

Literature

New Leadership Theories

Leadership was an unpredictable concept until about 20 years ago (Bligh, Kohles and Pillai, 2011). But as a result of considerable studies in this field, a classification of leadership qualifications

is now available today, the prediction of leadership and leaders can now be made more comfortably (Antonakis and Day, 2018).

Considering that the concept of leadership emerged as a result of needs, it is natural that new types of leaders emerge every day for changing needs. It is very difficult to catch up with the speed of change in the needs and conditions of society and business environment in recent years. As a result of the changing needs, the existence of leadership types that can respond to these needs successfully is a great chance for communities and businesses.

Newly developed leadership theories are based on separating leaders from non-leaders, focusing on personal qualities and characteristics (Neck and Houghton, 2006).

Extroversion, self-expression, being conscientious, disciplined, fulfilling promises, being open to change, being innovative, being flexible, dealing with uncertainties and adapting to changing conditions are among the common features of strategic leaders (Andersen, 2006).

So why are these features so critical for effective leadership?

The main component of the new identity types is empathy. Empathic leaders feel the needs of their followers and care about their followers' thoughts (Mahsud, Yukl and Prussia, 2010). Leaders who have good communication and can read well even when people don't say their reactions are active leaders today (Badea and Pană, 2010).

The ability to truly empathize is essential for the most effective leadership level. Empathy skills rank at the top when looking at the common characteristics of the managers of many big companies that have left their mark in the past, or the state executives in the top authorities (Cornelis, Van Hiel, De Cremer and Mayer, 2013).

It is the most important feature of an accomplished leader to take into account the thoughts of each individual in business processes (Beer ve Nohria, 2000). People are social beings and want to see that their ideas and senses are taken into consideration. There is an invisible strong bond between the followers whose opinions are taken into consideration and their leaders who consider them, apart from the official business relations.

So briefly, followers whose thoughts are considered as a major are individuals who are more satisfied with their jobs, take heed of their jobs, can internalize their businesses, are more motivated to their businesses, are loyal to their businesses, and respect their leaders so much more than other individuals (Goleman, 2004). In the organizational structure where such a leadership is exhibited, more efficiency is obtained from team work and the efficiency of the overall organization is achieved (Illouz, 2011). Performance evaluation results are highly positive in such organizations (Kellett, Humphrey and Sleeth, 2002).

In the light of new leadership theories, the developing intellectual and behavior oriented leadership type increases performance efficiency both inside and outside the company. Research on most performance metrics on this topic proves this argument (Northouse, 2018). Performance results obtained in Michigan Studies illustrate that employee-oriented leaders are more effective than production-oriented leaders and these studies support leaders who value individuals' thoughts (Johns and Moser, 1989). Influenced by employee-oriented leaders have higher job satisfaction and higher efficiency on their performance. It has been observed that the leadership type, which focused entirely on the efficiency of the processes and machines that emerged during the Industrial Revolution period when production-based technologies were first developed and practiced in businesses, did not even contribute positively to the companies' and employees' performance (Bryman, 1987). This type of leadership demotives individuals and this brings undesired outcomes in businesses. As a result of the management of production-oriented leaders, there is a decrease in productivity due to low job satisfaction in companies (Tjosvold, Andrews and Jones, 1983).

The Debate of Strategic Leadership in The Period of Covid-19 Epidemic: Conceptual Framework

Strategic Leadership

Considering the strategic leaders, it is the type of leadership that emerges from the necessity to be completed and delivered successfully due to the constraints of time and uncertainty in the tasks to be completed (McCarthy, 2014). Strategic leaders form specific task oriented groups to finish the given job and communicate closer, more flexible and more informal with the followers in this group (Petrullo and Bass, 1961). While the followers in this rescue team are determined by the leader, and the priority in selection process mostly depends on the followers' reliability factor (Banerjee, 2003), (Renko, El Tarabishy, Carsrud and Brännback, 2015).

The followers in these teams have some privileges compared to all the employees in the companies (Miller, 2010). These followers, who can slightly alleviate the pressure on the leader and have the ability to develop future-related strategies with their own personal insights inspite of the environmental uncertainty (Waldman, Ramirez, House and Puranam, 2001). Besides these special followers are more talented than any others. In this regard, the company has some privileges to them. Other followers fall into the outside of this determined group.

In the point of view of strategic leaders, the concept of time has vital importance. They pay attention time sensitivity in this regard and try to keep time consumption as optimum as possible (Hitt and Duane, 2002). For this reason, these small teams, which can be described as a rescue team, serve as a suspension for their strategic leadership processes by eliminating idle time and in terms of time savings in shortening the duration of internal activities (Strand, 2014).

Strategic leaders are semi-autocratic and half-democratic leaders (Shrivastava and Nachman, 1989). The leadership attitudes of strategic leaders vary depending on the changing conditions. Strategic leaders could perform the official and dominant management style if necessary or they could set some strict rules for their followers within the company (Eisenhardt and Brown, 1998). In opposite, they could provide the motivation for their followers that will allow them to realize themselves and strategic leaders could liberate their followers with a soft and flexible management style if necessary (Fry, 2003)

On the other hand, the fact that how effective strategic leadership attitudes that a leader performs to have influence on its followers does not only depend on the leader; followers should also be ready to be influenced and managed (Malamud, 2011). Therefore, no matter how effective the strategic leader is, every leader may not be accepted by all segments of society or all employees in firms (Shao, 2019). Depending on how motivated and willing individuals are to do the work, it is possible to have an idea about whether individuals are ready for their leaders or not.

Despite of the fact that the strategic leaders chase their followers tightly at the beginning of the leadership process and direct their followers closely, in the following leadership period, they could leave the frequency of this follow-up and let their followers fly with their own wings (Kellerman, 2007).

The reason for this is that the most effective results depend on the self-realization potential of the followers. In other words, as much as the value added by the leader, the followers should add some values from their own self to the process (Phipps, 2012). If followers are incompetent but willing, their leaders need to guide them on more technical issues and motivate them to succeed. Talented but reluctant individuals are the followers whom the leaders must have to demonstrate their most effective leadership skills (Leroy, Palanski and Simons, 2012). When the followers are both talented and determined individuals, they do not force their leader to make much efforts. Such followers perform superiorly and are extremely determined to fulfill no matter what task is given.

Strategic Leaders and Their Useful Business Strategies in The Period of Covid-19 Epidemic

Businesses are affected by number of difficult conditions due to Covid-19 Epidemic period (Fernandes, 2020). After doing some literature research about new leadership theories, among all known typical leadership features the characteristics of strategic leadership are features that will enable businesses to get out of this tough processes in current epidemic period successfully (Craven, Liu, Mysore and Wilson, 2020). Strategic leadership skills will let businesses being least affected by these business environmental negativities and uncertainty factors (DeSarbo, Anthony Di Benedetto, Song and Sinha, 2005).

Few followers prefer to be excluded from the team where their strategic leaders can develop strategies together for the upcoming period. There may be a number of risks and negativities that involve being included in the strategy team, such as intra-group conflict, incomplete reflection of the performance shown. However, when looking at the big picture being a partner in strategic decisions brings both financial and moral benefits (Damon, 2004) to the followers in acting in close communication with their leaders are quite high.

Strategic leaders achieve fruitful results from the strategies they have developed with the help of these teams they have established in period of crisis with difficult conditions (Lee, Beamish, Lee and Park, 2009). One of the features that distinguish strategic leaders from other leaders in these challenging periods is that they act as part of the team and individuals like with equal status with other followers' status (Adair, 1988). They do not emphasize their status within the teamworking (Strand, 2014). The reason leaders prefer to show this attitude in this way is not about sharing profitability of the strategies they developed jointly by the team. On the contrary, leaders support the followers financially because of their accomplishment establishing new useful strategies (Rowe, 2001). The purpose of leaders is only to ensure that the followers are satisfied with the hard complicated tasks they cope with (Koonin, 2020). Since strategic leaders heed their followers will be successful as long as they provide financial and moral satisfaction (Darvish and Rezaei, 2011).

On the other hand, followers who had observed their leaders when they were not included in the team before, have noticed how wrong they were in their judgment when they have joined the teamwork with their leaders. This is another successful strategic enhancing organizational commitment attitude that the leader has developed on his followers.

The success of leaders is closely influenced by environmental factors as well as individuals' abilities and willingness. If strategic leaders expect their followers to perform at the highest level, they must analyze the environmental conditions well and determine a management style suitable for these conditions. Therefore, it is very important to analyze and interpret the environmental conditions in which firms is affected (Crossan, Vera, and Nanjad, 2008).

When evaluating the current Covid-19 Epidemic period, it is a fact that most of the business strategies implemented in the past were just garbage (Craven, Liu, Mysore and Wilson, 2020). Besides the emergency short term reaction plans set by managers during this period; the existence of a strategic leader who develops a successful vision to maintain the sustainability of the company in markets by analyzing uncertainties well in the business environment is a must (sine qua non) in firms (Ding, Levine, Lin and Xie, 2020). Because, strategic leaders make strategic plans to manage successfully both the epidemic period and the post-epidemic period in line with the unique vision and leadership skills.

In order to show an effective and successful strategic leadership performance; government regulations regarding the industry in which the firms are located, support and incentive systems, state restrictions and quotas, commercial privileges, commercial obligations (Harris and Adhanom Ghebreyesus, 2020), if the firms are trading international business; international trade law

regulations, sanctions, global market regulations, current situation in the countries where trade is made, many environmental factors such as crisis changes, current status of the financial market, customer and supplier relations (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez, and Trespalacios, 2012) would have to be evaluated well.

There are more factors surrounding a firm than the factors mentioned in previous paragraph. It is almost impossible to reach and analyze all environmental factors. Environmental analysis is a complex process and requires a number of unique skills. In terms of what degree, the environmental factors data reflects the reality (Fairholm, 1998) is also crucial to evaluate a successful strategic leadership performance of the leaders.

Strategic leaders cannot reach and evaluate all environmental factors completely. But in a meanwhile; they can make realistic predictions about the future of the company with the induction method. Strategic leaders could evaluate the environmental factors to their way of thinking which have the most direct influences on the companies they are the leader of (Rothaermel, 2016). Depending on these estimates, they can develop long-term realistic strategies with the strategy teams they have formed.

Unexpected situational factors such as stress and confusion caused by the Covid-19 Epidemic are characterized by conditional variables (Hewitt, 2020) and greatly impact the decision-making processes of strategic leaders (Parnell, Widdop, Bond and Wilson, 2020). Considering that leaders are social individuals, it is illogical to think that they can make decisions by isolating them from these complex environment and unexpected situational factors (Judge, Colbert and Ilies, 2004). While evaluating the success of the strategies developed by the leaders, it would be the right decision not to ignore the effects of these factors on strategic leaders.

The power of the vision of strategic leaders and how they apply this vision to their companies' goals is important. If the vision is clear, understandable, interesting and appealing to everyone (Kantabutra, 2010), it can motivate all followers for a mutual purpose. On the contrary, an incomprehensible and sophisticated vision will not allow followers to participate in the commons goals, so that feasible strategies will be insufficient in solving complex problems. In the challenging conditions of today's Covid-19 Epidemic period, it is very important that strategic leaders behave flexibly towards their followers (Haak-Saheem, 2020). The leaders should notice the problems that arise in this epidemic period and to make revolutionary strategic plans that will ensure success in the long term instead of simple short-term buffer plans.

Conclusion

Working with a strategic leader is an uplifting experience for its followers. The strategic leaders change all strategic issues from soup to nuts in businesses and set aside outdated (expired) strategies. They care about you and want you to succeed.

There are many things to do to protect businesses from the negative effects of the Covid-19 Epidemic. First of all, it is essential to give up classical management tools and to perform a motivating strategic leadership skills to the followers. In this Covid-19 Epidemic period, the controller and strict management style like in classical managerial methods should have to been avoided. Instead, the management mechanism should be stretched in order to make the followers feel more comfortable in inconvenient conditions such as working online at home, communicating with people regarding social distance, renewed supply chain management from a to izzard, new customer management systems.

Adapting to similar business processes to this new business environment forces leaders to admit followers as individuals before than employees by moving away from leaders' customarily autocratic style. Strategic leaders must adopt a leadership style to up-to-date leadership styles.

Strategic leaders expect followers to come up with innovative solutions to problems that arise in uncertain conditions, such as Covid-19 Epidemic conditions. Adaptation to this new situation increases the number of errors in followers' work. Strategic leaders should be more tolerant of these mistakes made by their followers during this period and should not lose their trust to their followers that they can improve themselves continuously.

The important thing is that a strategic leader is not just developing strong strategies in the challenging Covid-19 Epidemic period but also in line with a successful vision; strategic leaders are the people who can ensure that these visions and strategies to be adopted and accepted by the whole human resource in their businesses. This is the main leadership skills of strategic leaders that distinguishes them from managers and any other leaders.

The aim of this study is to make business people recognize that strategic leadership skills can help to contribute to the elimination of uncertainties and environmental problems around all sizes of companies in Covid-19 epidemic period. Besides, the goal of this study to guide how companies try to survive against difficult circumstances of Covid-19 epidemic could benefit from strategic leadership skills while explaining the advantages and dimensions of strategic leadership.

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