Leadership Styles and Subordinate Work Engagement: The Moderating Impact of Leader Gender

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Abstract:
Purpose: The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between benevolent and authoritarian leadership styles and subordinates' work engagement. In addition, the study explores whether this relationship is moderated by leader gender.
Design/methodology/approach: Convenience sampling was employed and data were obtained from a sample of 350 white-collar employees in Turkey. The employees voluntarily filled in a survey questionnaire.
Findings: The findings from the data analysis indicate that benevolent leadership is positively associated with the dedication and vigor dimension of work engagement. Moreover, it was found that benevolent leadership is positively associated with the absorption dimension of work engagement.
Research limitations: This research has a cross-sectional design, which limits drawing conclusions about causality. Moreover, convenience sampling was used for this, which limits the generalizability of the research results. The use of self-administered questionnaires leads to concerns over method bias.
Practical implications: The results of this study highlight the importance of benevolent leadership in relation to employees' work engagement. Organizations may use the outcomes of this research in their efforts to create an environment that fosters work engagement. Moreover, the findings of this study can be utilized in leadership development training programs.
Originality/value: This study adds to scarce research examining the relationship between benevolent and authoritarian leadership styles and employees' work engagement. Moreover, there is limited research in the Turkish context that investigates leader gender as a moderator of subordinate outcomes. This research also contributes to the literature by examining the listed variables in a single study.

Keywords: Benevolent leadership, authoritarian leadership, work engagement, leader gender, Turkish culture.
Paper type: Research Paper.

Introduction

The emergence of positive psychology (studies such as those of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002) has led to increased attention in the positive constructs of employee well-being, one of which is work engagement. This has been defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Various studies (such as Ghadi, Fernando, and Caputi, 2013; Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012; Babcock-Roberson and Strickland 2010; Giallonardo, Wong, and Iwasiw, 2010) have linked leadership style to employee work engagement. Authoritarian and benevolent leadership styles are examined in this research. The former is defined as leader behavior that uses authority and control over subordinates, demanding unquestionable obedience. On the other hand, benevolence is leader behavior that shows individual concern over followers' personal or familial well-being (Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, and Farh, 2004). A number of former studies indicated that benevolent leadership influence different subordinate outcomes, such as creativity (Wang and Cheng, 2010), compliance with the supervisor's requirements and work motivation (Niu, Wang, and Cheng, 2009), and task performance, citizenship behavior and creativity (Wang, Chiang, Tsai, Lin, and Cheng, 2013). In addition, considerable amount of research has found that authoritarian leadership style affect a number of subordinate outcomes such as task performance, citizenship behavior and creativity (Wang et al., 2013); organization-based self-esteem and task performance (Chan et al., 2013); employee performance (Chen et al., 2011).

Authoritarian and benevolent leadership are both commonly found in the Turkish context. Ronen (1986) pointed out that many Turkish organizations have the characteristics of centralized decision making, highly personalized, strong leadership, in addition to limited delegation. Furthermore, Kabasakal and Bodur's (1998) study concluded that Turkish leaders are either mainly autocratic/paternalistic or consultative. Moreover, Kozan (1993) indicated that traditionally, a benevolent, autocratic leadership style is valued highly in Turkish society. In light of these former studies, this current research investigates the relationship between authoritarian and benevolent leadership styles and subordinates' work engagement. The moderating influence of leader gender on this relationship is also probed.

The social role theory of sex differences indicates that, in general, people are expected to act in accordance with their culturally defined roles (Eagly, 1987). However, by fulfilling people's expectations about manager or leader roles, women can violate what is considered as appropriate female behavior. According to the degree that female leaders violate their subordinates' gender expectations, leaders might face prejudiced reactions such as biased performance evaluations and negative assumptions about future performance (Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani, 1995). Considering the difference in expected gender role behaviors of male and female leaders, this current study examines the moderating influence of leader gender.

This research contributes to the literature in several ways. First of all, although there are studies (e.g. Ghadi et al., 2013; Zhu, Avolio, and Walumbwa, 2009) in the literature that have investigated the influence of transformational leadership style on follower work engagement, there is scarce research that examines the relationship between benevolent and authoritarian leadership styles and this engagement. Our paper extends the former literature by examining the relationship between benevolent and authoritarian leadership styles on subordinate work engagement. In addition, there is limited research in the Turkish context that has investigated leader gender as a moderator of subordinate outcomes. This study also contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between benevolent and authoritarian leadership styles, employees' work engagement, and leader gender in a single work.

Literature Review
Authoritarian and Benevolent Leadership

Paternalistic leadership style has been defined as "combined strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity" (Farh and Cheng, 2000, p. 84). Authoritarian and benevolent leadership styles are among the features associated with paternalistic leadership (Farh and Cheng, 2000). The former refers to leader behavior that uses control strategies that involve exerting strong authority over subordinates, utilizing control tactics to maintain power status, and exercising strict discipline (Cheng et al., 2004). On the other hand, benevolent leaders show individualized concern for subordinates' personal well-being (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). Various studies have indicated national and contextual differences in leadership styles (such as Ersoy, Born, Derous and van der Molen, 2012; van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2010; Cheng et al., 2004). Related to cultural distinctions between the West and East, subordinate perceptions of leadership styles can also differ in Eastern and in Western contexts. For example, while non-Western cultures often consider a paternalistic leadership style effective and fruitful, Western ones associate it with authoritarianism (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). Paternalism has been criticized in Western cultures due to its unquestioned power inequality and the associated implications. One of these implications is that paternalistic leaders assume that they have superiority over their subordinates on key competencies (e.g. skills and experience) and moral standards (Aycan, 2006). Moreover, owing to the individualistic values embedded in Western organizations, a leader's well-intentioned involvement with his/her subordinates' personal lives would in many cases be viewed as interference (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). The benevolent aspect of paternalism also has been criticized by Western scholars, who claim that it is synonymous with "noncoercive exploitation" (Goodell, 1985, p. 252). On the other hand, authoritarian and benevolence leadership behaviors (as elements of paternalistic leadership) are extensively found in various non-Western regions, i.e. the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, and Latin America. In general, collectivistic cultures embrace authoritarian and benevolent leadership more positively compared to individually oriented cultures (Niu et. al., 2009; Fikret-Pasa, Kabasakal and Bodur, 2001).

Since Turkish culture has a collectivist orientation (Wasti, 2003), high uncertainty avoidance and high power distance characteristics, authoritarian and benevolent leadership are the most prevalent styles in the country (Ersoy et al., 2012; Aycan, 2006; Fikret-Pasa et al., 2001). Business life in Turkey is dominated by private holding companies run by family members and also state economic enterprises, most of which hold centralized decision-making with a hierarchical leadership style (Fikret-Pasa et al., 2001; Ronen 1986). Much importance is placed on forming warm relationships and building trust among organizational members. In addition, these authoritarian and benevolence leadership styles are socially accepted by subordinates in organizations, because they lead to structured unambiguous working environments, which reduce employee uncertainty levels (Ersoy et al., 2012; Pellegrini, and Scandura, 2006). Fikret-Pasa et al.'s (2001) research on 92 respondents in Turkey investigated leadership behaviors that are practiced in Turkey and found that the ideal leader was frequently described as somebody who was considerate and paternalistic. Moreover, authoritarian characteristics were described as desired attributes of leaders. Further, when describing ideal leader characteristics, the participants often stated being informed about all the details of the job, and a hands-on approach to issues was essential. As indicated above, a number of studies (such as Ghadi, Fernando, and Caputi, 2013; Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012) have elicited that leadership style is related to work engagement. This current study investigates the relationship between benevolent and authoritarian leadership styles and subordinates' work engagement.

Work Engagement

The term "work engagement" was first put forward by Kahn (1990) as "the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles" (p. 694). Moreover, it refers to the degree of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in a job role, how much effort an individual exerts in that role as well as how an individual's work-related and personal interactions with others are in the role (Lee and Ok, 2015). Schaufeli et al. (2002) contended that work engagement has three dimensions: vigor (having high levels of energy and mental resilience on the job), dedication (having a sense of significance, pride, enthusiasm, inspiration and challenge), and absorption (being totally concentrated and deeply engrossed at work). The role of leadership is discussed in relation to facilitating employees' work engagement in the literature (Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012). That is, the pattern of behavior that a leader uses to interact with his/her subordinates in terms of the level and quality of communication between him/her and his/her employees is argued to influence employees' feelings regarding engagement in the organization (Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012; Saks, 2006). In addition, a leader's expression of care and support for subordinates is found to have a positive relationship on employee engagement. Specifically, the more leaders are receptive to concerns and welcome feedback from their subordinates, the higher the work engagement is expected to be (Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012). Moreover, the extant literature points to a positive influence of benevolent leadership on a number of subordinate outcomes, such as creativity (Wang and Cheng, 2010). Empirically, Niu et al.'s (2009) study on 265 Taiwanese employees found that leader benevolence increased subordinates' compliance with the supervisor's requirements and work motivation. Similarly, Wang et al.'s (2013) study revealed a positive relationship between benevolent leadership and subordinate performance. Based on these discussions, we propose that benevolent leadership is positively related to employees' work engagement and hence, the first research hypothesis is constructed as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between benevolent leadership style and subordinates' work engagement.

When leaders encourage their subordinates' involvement in decision making processes and expression of their points of view, they can develop higher levels of engagement at work (Mendes and Stander, 2011). However, because authoritarian leadership style involves control over and obedience from subordinates, in general, this does not empower employees, i.e. encourage them to present suggestions to solve problems and make improvements which would most likely contribute to employees' ownership feelings towards the organization. In fact, a considerable amount of research (such as Wang et al., 2013; Chan et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2011) has found a negative association between authoritarian leadership style and employee job attitudes. Regarding which, Özçelik and Cenkci's (2014) research on 224 employees in Turkey also elicited a negative relationship between the austere dimension of paternalistic leadership and employee in-role job performance. Conversely, several other studies (De Villiers and Stander, 2011; Mendes and Stander, 2011) have discovered that leaders' empowering behavior towards employees positively impacts on their work engagement. In respect of this, May, Gilson and Harter (2004) have asserted that the more empowering leader behaviors towards employees are, the higher the engagement of employees at the physical, emotional and cognitive levels are expected to be. Based on these statements, we propose that authoritarian leadership is negatively associated with employee engagement and hence, the second research hypothesis is developed as:

H_2: There is a negative relationship between authoritarian leadership style and subordinates' work engagement.

Leader Gender as a Moderator

Gender stereotypes influence perceptions about how women and men should behave (Heilman, 2001; Eagly and Karau, 2002). The social role theory asserts that gender roles can be classified into two categories: The male agentic character and the female communal one. The former pertains to control-oriented, authority-related, dominating and demanding behavior, whereas the latter is expected to involve having a nurturing, helpful, benevolent, and supportive demeanor (Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2000). Prior studies have indicated that leadership style seems to interact with leader gender to influence ratings of leader effectiveness (Cellar, Sidle, Goudy, and O'Brien, 2001). For instance, Wang et al.'s (2013) study on Taiwanese employees examined how authoritarian and benevolent leadership styles interact with leader gender to impact on employee performance (namely, task performance, citizenship behavior, and creativity). The outcomes of this research indicated that supervisors' gender differentiates the degree of perceived leadership effectiveness. Specifically, the findings revealed that a negative association between authoritarian leadership and subordinates' performance is stronger for female than for male leaders. It also emerged that the positive relationship between benevolent leadership and employee performance is stronger for male than female leaders. Similarly, Oakley's (2000) research indicated that when female leaders behave in a more control-oriented and authoritarian style, they are more likely to receive negative feedback from their subordinates compared to men, because these behaviors are seen as being incongruous with the expected role that women should play. Conversely, in line with the gender-role congruity theory (Eagly and Karau, 2002), Cheng and Lin's (2012) research discovered that when men exert authoritative and dominating behavior over subordinates, their leadership effectiveness is greater as this is considered consistent with the stereotypical role attributed to men. These researchers also found that female supervisors are expected to exert benevolent leadership, if they are to increase their leadership effectiveness, because care and concern towards their subordinates are consistent with their anticipated gender behavior. In fact, it emerged that when females demonstrate low levels of benevolent leadership, their subordinates perform at a lower level than those of their male counterparts (ibid).

Based on these discussions, we propose that the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and subordinate performance is stronger for female leaders compared to males. In addition, it is expected that the positive association between benevolent leadership and employee performance will be stronger for male leaders compared to female ones. Hence, our third and fourth study hypotheses are:

H_3: Leader gender moderates the positive relationship between benevolent leadership style and subordinates' work engagement.
H_4: Leader gender moderates the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership style and subordinates' work engagement.

Methodology
Data and sample
Data were collected through a self-administered survey questionnaire completed by white-collar employees working in Turkey. The participants were employees in five different organizations in different industrial sectors, namely, healthcare, manufacturing, education, information technology, and pharmaceuticals. These organizations are based in the cities of Istanbul and Izmir in Turkey. Convenience sampling was employed for the study. The

managers of several organizations were contacted through personal contacts. The survey instrument was distributed to employees in organizations whose management approved such distribution of questionnaires. An equal number of survey questionnaires were distributed in these five organizations, with the participants being determined according to random selection with a cluster sampling method. The employees voluntarily participated in the study, with no incentives being offered and they returned their responses in sealed envelopes. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed and 356 were returned filled in, hence representing a response rate of 79%. Six were withdrawn from the analysis owing to too many missing answers and so in total, 350 questionnaires were used.

Measures

Benevolent and authoritarian leadership styles were measured using Cheng et al.'s (2004) Paternalistic Leadership Scale. This instrument has three dimensions, namely, benevolent, authoritarian, and moral leadership. In the current study, 20 items belonging to the benevolent and authoritarian leadership dimensions were used. Work engagement was measured with Utrecth's Work Enthusiasm Scale. This 17-item Work and Well-Being Survey (UWES) instrument was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). This scale has three dimensions namely, vigor, dedication, and absorption. Moreover, the respondents were asked to indicate their leader's gender in a separate question. The survey instrument was prepared in Turkish and the participants provided their responses on a 6-item Likert scale. Cheng et al.'s (2004) Paternalistic Leadership Scale was translated into Turkish by Otken and Cenkci (2012) for their research, which was also used for the current study. The participants were directed to consider their direct line manager when they were answering the survey instrument. Finally, a Turkish translation of Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) UWES instrument was taken from Guneser's (2007) research, to which some modifications were made so as to make it pertinent to the identified sample.

Analyses and Results

The survey data were analyzed using SPSS software. 43.1 % of the respondents were women and 55.7 % of them were men, whilst 39.1 % were married and 59.1 % were single. The mean of current job tenure was 4.5 years and that of total work experience was 8.6 years, with the mean age being 31 years. 2.9 % of the respondents had a high school diploma, 67.1 % of them had a university degree, 25.1 % of them had a masters degree, and 4.3 % of them had a PhD. 26.6 % of the participants indicated that their line manager was female and 67.1 % reported that he was male. From the summing of these percentages, it can be seen that some participants had missing responses regarding the demographic questions.

Factor and reliability analysis were applied to the data. The former involved the use of the principal components solution with varimax rotation and Table 1 shows the results in relation to leadership style. After the benevolent and authoritarian dimensions of Cheng et al.'s (2004) Paternalistic Leadership scale were employed, the findings indicated that the items loaded differently in the current study. Three factors were found as a result of the factor analysis, which were named: benevolent, austere, and dictator. The items belonging to the authoritarian leadership dimension loaded onto the austere and dictator dimensions and the data analysis provided similar results to those of Otken and Cenkci's (2012) study. Thus, austere and dictator dimensions were named based on Otken and Cenkci's (2012) research.

Table 1: Results of the Factor Analysis of Leadership Style

	Factor Loadings
Factor 1: Benevolent, % Variance: 40.676, Mean: 3.746, Standard Deviation: 1.259	
My supervisor ordinarily shows a kind concern for my comfort.	.900
My supervisor meets my needs according to my personal requests.	.880
My supervisor tries to understand what the cause is when I don't perform well.	.861
Beyond work relations, my supervisor expresses concern about my daily life.	.854
My supervisor encourages me when I encounter arduous problems.	.846
My supervisor will help me when I'm in an emergency.	.837
My supervisor is like a family member when he/she gets along with us.	.812
My supervisor takes very thoughtful care of subordinates who have spent a long time with him/her.	.791
My supervisor takes good care of my family members as well.	.787
My supervisor handles what is difficult to do or manage in everyday life for me.	.783
My supervisor devotes all his/her energy to taking care of me.	.777
Factor 2: Austere, % Variance:22.099, Mean: 2.821, Standard Deviation: 1.437	
My supervisor scolds us when we can't accomplish our tasks.	.886
We have to follow his/her rules to get things done. If not, he/she punishes us severely.	.872
I feel pressured when working with him/her.	.838
My supervisor exercises strict discipline over subordinates.	.827
My supervisor always behaves in a commanding fashion in front of employees.	.826
Factor 3: Dictator, % Variance: 11.237, Mean: 3.876, Standard Deviation: 1.1823	
My supervisor always has the last say in the meeting.	.802
My supervisor determined all decisions in the organization whether they are important or not.	.787
My supervisor asks me to obey his/her instructions completely.	.714
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Value: .934, **Bartlett Significance Value**: .000, **Chi-Square Value**: 5405.077, **df**: 171	

Table 2 shows the factor analysis results for subordinate work engagement. The outcomes indicate that even though Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) UWES instrument has three dimensions (namely, vigor, dedication, and absorption), two dimensions were found for the current research. The first factor consisted of dedication and vigor items and thus, it was named as "dedication and vigor". The second factor consists of mainly absorption items and so was given this name.

Table 2: Results of the Factor Analysis of Subordinates' Work Engagement

	Factor Loadings
Factor 1: Dedication and Vigor, % Variance: 31.417, Mean: 4.056, Standard Deviation: .959	
I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	
I am enthusiastic about my job.	
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	.829
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	.816
I am proud on the work that I do.	.797
My job inspires me.	.775
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	.692
To me, my job is challenging.	.637
	.624
	.580

Factor 2: Absorption, % Variance: 30.010, Mean: 3.922, Standard Deviation: .979

I am immersed in my work.	.834
It is difficult to detach myself from my job.	.803
I get carried away when I'm working.	.790
When I am working, I forget everything else around me.	.747
I can continue working for very long periods at a time.	.703
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	.571

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Value: .923, **Bartlett Significance Value**: .000, **Chi-Square Value**: 2928.710, **df**: 91

Table 3 lists the factor reliabilities and their intercorrelations, with the Cronbach's alpha values of the factors being given in parentheses.

Table 3: Factor Reliability and Intercorrelations

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Leadership Style Factor 1: Benevolent	(.957)	-.301**	-.012	.447**	.391**
2. Leadership Style 2: Austere	-.301**	(.938)	.531**	-.203**	-.084
3. Leadership Style Factor 3: Dictator	-.012	.531**	(.771)	.019	-.006
4. Work Engagement Factor 1: Dedication and Vigor	.447**	-.203**	.019	(.913)	.670**
5. Work Engagement Factor 2: Absorption	.391**	-.084	-.006	.670**	(.878)

** p< .01

In order to test the first and second research hypotheses, regression analyses were carried between the leadership styles and subordinates' work engagement, with Table 4 showing the results. The outcomes suggest that benevolent leadership is positively related to work engagement factor 1, namely, "dedication and vigor". In addition, it was found that this style of leadership is positively related to work engagement factor 2, namely, absorption. Thus, we can conclude that the first research hypothesis is supported, but the second is not.

Table 4: Regression Analysis between Leadership Style and Subordinates' Work Engagement

Dependent Variable: Work Engagement Factor 1: Dedication and Vigor

Independent Variables:	**Beta**	**t value**	**p value**
Leadership Style Fac. 1	.417	7.798	.000**
Leadership Style Fac. 2	-.122	-1.930	.055
Leadership Style Fac. 3	.106	1.766	.078

R= .466; **Adjusted R^2** = .209; **F value**= 28.963; **p value**= 0.000

Dependent Variable: Work Engagement Factor 2: Absorption

Independent Variables:	**Beta**	**t value**	**p value**
Leadership Style Fac. 1	.408	7.350	.000**
Leadership Style Fac. 2	.067	1.020	.309
Leadership Style Fac. 3	-.017	-.275	.784

R= .391; **Adjusted R^2** = .145; **F value**= 19.096; **p value**= .000

**p<.05

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the third and fourth hypotheses. These were conducted only for leadership style factor 1 (benevolent), because the former analyses indicated that the association between other leadership style and work engagement factors was insignificant. In order to reduce the incidence of multicollinearity, the independent variables were centered, as suggested by Aiken and West (1991) and the standardized scores for the variables were used. Table 5 lists the findings of the hierarchical regression analyses, indicating that the moderating influence of leader gender was insignificant and hence the third and fourth research hypotheses are not supported.

Table 5: Results of the Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Dependent variable: Work Engagement Factor 1- Dedication and Vigor			
Independent variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Leadership Style Fac. 1 (Benevolent)	.442**	.442**	.487**
Leader Gender		-.052	-.062
Benevolent × Gender			-.082
R²	.196	.198	.203
Adjusted R²	.193	.193	.195
ΔR²	.196	.003	.005
F	74.118**	37.581**	25.692**
Dependent variable: Work Engagement Factor 2- Absorption			
Independent variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Leadership Style Fac. 1 (Benevolent)	.391**	.390**	.407**
Leader Gender		-.019	-.023
Benevolent × Gender			-.031
R²	.153	.153	.154
Adjusted R²	.150	.147	.145
ΔR²	.153	.000	.001
F	55.644**	27.809**	18.574**

**p< .05

Discussion

The current research has determined that benevolent leadership is positively associated with the "dedication and vigor" dimension of work engagement in addition to the absorption dimension. This current study highlights the importance of benevolent leadership on employee engagement. The findings of this research are in line with former studies. Regarding which, Dilber (1967) claimed that Turkish industrial leaders can be described as authoritarian, but demonstrating nurturing leader behaviors and proposed the use of benevolent behavior as a more effective option. Similarly, Wang et al.'s (2013) study also found a positive association between benevolent leadership and subordinates' performance.

In this current study, the items belonging to the authoritarian leadership dimension in Cheng et al.'s (2004) Paternalistic Leadership Scale loaded onto the austere and dictator dimensions. However, the association between these two dimensions and subordinates' work engagement was insignificant. Similar to this finding, Niu et al.'s (2009) research on 265 Taiwanese employees elicited that leader authoritarianism was unrelated to subordinates' compliance with the supervisor and work motivation. Moreover, as indicated earlier, Kabasakal and Bodur's (1998) study concluded that Turkish leaders are either mainly autocratic/paternalistic or consultative. Furthermore, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) study on understanding cultural diversity among 38 nations, found that Turkey has the steepest hierarchy in its organizations, which indicates the subordination of employees to their leader. Therefore, the outcomes of this current research might be related to the fact that authoritarian leadership

is the dominant style in the Turkish context and the use of authoritarian leadership by leaders does not negatively influence subordinates' work engagement to any significant degree. In such a context, it would appear that authoritarian leadership style is socially accepted by those lower in the hierarchy. The insignificant relationship between authoritarian leadership and work engagement in this study can be attributed to the different cultural values between non-Western and Western contexts, for in the latter societies authoritarian leader behaviors are perceived negatively and associated with dictatorship (Öner, 2012; Fikret-Pasa et al., 2001; Pellegrini, and Scandura, 2006).

A moderating influence of leader gender was not found either. The outcomes point that leader gender does not significantly impact the relationship between leadership style and employees' work engagement. The difference between the actual results and those expected could be related to a variety of factors, including the characteristics of the sample organizations that participated in the study. As explained earlier, white-collar employees from five organizations in different industries (healthcare, manufacturing, education, information technology, and pharmaceutical) participated in the research and the unanticipated results could be due to the characteristics of the industries from which the sample data was collected. Consequently, it is proposed that future studies using this research model should be conducted with bigger sample sizes covering a wider range of industries in Turkey to see whether the outcomes of the current study are replicated or not.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership style (benevolent and authoritarian leadership) and employee engagement as well as whether there is a moderating influence of leader gender. The results indicate that there is a significant association between benevolent leadership and subordinates' work engagement. The findings emphasize the importance of benevolent leadership on work engagement in Turkish business context.

The outcomes of this study suggest a number of managerial implications. First of all, organizations could use them in their efforts to create an environment that fosters employee work engagement. The findings underline the importance of benevolent leadership and organizations may incorporate practices that encourage the use of benevolent leadership style. In addition, the findings of this study can be utilized in leadership development training programs. Leaders who understand the importance of benevolent leadership style might adopt that to increase subordinate work engagement.

While this study makes some important contributions to the literature, it has some limitations. First of all, a cross-sectional design was used, which limits drawing conclusions about causality and so future studies on this topic could use longitudinal research design to examine these relationships. We should note that our findings are also limited by the research context and sample size. In addition, convenience sampling was used for this research, which does not allow for generalizability of the results and the use of self-reporting raises some concerns over method bias. Finally, in this study the items of authoritarian leadership style loaded differently than the model offered in Cheng et al.'s (2004) Paternalistic Leadership scale and the work engagement scale loaded differently than the Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) instrument. These outcomes are thus another limitation of the study.

Further research is needed on this study model. Firstly, the generalizability of our findings needs to be tested by considering different cultural contexts. In addition, the research model should be tested with additional variables, such as the moral leadership dimension of paternalistic leadership. Furthermore, as suggested above, it would be useful to test the research model on a bigger sample, collected in different cities of Turkey. Moreover, the data collection

can be done in organizations from different industries, in addition to the five industries used in this study. Moreover, this current research was conducted on white-collar employees and so future studies on this subject could examine the study variables with blue-collar employees.

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