

Forgiveness As A Leadership Feature And A Study On Its Effects On Organizational Level

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Extensive Summary

Leadership is an important topic for the organizations naturally. It is becoming important in recent years. Although it has been studied on for years, it is still an intriguing for the administration literature. Leadership is a process of a social effect which aims to encourage the participation of the subordinates and try to reach the goals of the organization (Olesia et al. 2014, p. 75). A leader is a person who is willing to forgive others for the personal freedom rather than making them feel shame and guilt. By forgiving the others, leader accepts their flaws and takes a step forward to the development of their personal relationships (Kastan, 2010, s. 86).

There are studies on the various aspects of the forgiveness lately and the number of these studies are increasing rapidly. The studies relevant to the subject has gained momentum during the 80s. Forgiveness and forgiving have become one of the most studied subject in the 2000s. Moreover with the rise of the psychology, forgiveness gains more importance in psychology and psychotherapy. It is considered that it hasn't got the necessary attention by the organizations in our country.

This study is considered to be beneficial to the area as it offers some suggestions about forgiveness as a characteristic of a leader, its effects on organizational level and its use on organizational level.

Forgiveness and Forgiving

Forgiveness is described as a process between the perpetrator and the victim who undergoes a pain that one does not deserve and instead of feelings like anger and vengeance, gives up the right to punish the criminal or the right of vengeance and shows mercy (Kara, 2009, p. 222). Although it has quite a lot definitions, many researchers and theoreticians have agreed that forgiveness does not mean "to forget, to tolerate, to excuse, to overlook, to pardon, to recognize, to vindicate, to acquit, to free, to

reconciliate, to come to an agreement, to mediate and not to resolve the problem” (Hui ve Cahau, 2009, p. 142; Fincham, Hall, & Beach, 2005; Narrator: Sarı, 2014, p. 1499).

A great number of benefits are reported in studies. Reduction of negative emotions, regulation and controlling of physical and mental health are among these benefits (Bradfield, Aquino, 1999: 607-631). The reason why forgiveness has gained so much importance nowadays is the acceleration of the studies on positive psychology and forgiveness is a social personality characteristic discussed in positive psychology.

Forgiveness is a multidimensional psychological concept and includes lots of levels. Smedes “journey” metaphor is used to understand the states of a person during forgiving process and forgiveness is liken to a four station journey. There are various forgiving processes. In this study, two models are mentioned which are 9 steps forgiving process developed by Luskin (2003) (Kymenlaakso, 2012, p. 440) and “Reach” forgiving process developed by Worthington who provided a new perspective to the forgiving ritual (Kara, 2009, p. 227).

Leadership and Forgiveness

Leaders play a crucial role in the fostering of the forgiveness. Accordingly they are active in the advancement and the treatment of the organization. Leaders support and legitimate forgiveness culture, create vision and add meaning to create forgiveness culture. But it should not be forgotten that forgiveness does not mean to tolerate or to ignore the fault. Also it does not mean to excuse them. On the contrary it eases the perfection and the development (Cameron, 2002, p. 24). Transformative leadership and servant leadership concepts take their places in the leadership paradigms and present perspectives regarding to forgiveness. Both transformative and servant leader focus on human. It is understandable and easy to request the behaviors that exist in the self of a leader from the followers. Because of this lots of desired impressive features are related to the realization of the leader. This can be possible with the forgiveness feature of a leader.

The Organizational Effects of the Forgiveness

There are critical costs of the forgiveness in the organizations, but forgiveness is one of the answers of the question “How the workers can be improved?” (Williams, 2015). Cameron and Caza (2002) defined the organizational forgiveness as a prospective positive response instead of anger, pain and inculcation for the harm and damage. Forgiveness in the organizations need a transformation. This transformation is as virtuous as it is supportive, facilitating and encouraging (Madsen vd., 2009, p. 248). Historically organizational studies have mentioned justice and injustice rather than forgiveness. Justice is required for the effective organizational life. But forgiveness is required especially in the small, contentious and competitive organizations. Forgiving can be used as a conflict management strategy. Forgiveness is encouraged as a conflict management strategy (Butler-Mullis, 2001, p. 84; *Narrator*: Akın vd, 2012, s. 82). In order to reduce conflicts and create a peaceful environment placing a conciliation encouraging concept which includes forgiving into the organizational culture may be beneficial. If a manager spots a conflict between two persons in the organization and realize that there is an intention of vengeance he/she should intervene before aggrieved one take a step for the vengeance. The manager as a mediator should encourage the accused one to recover loss and apologize (Bies vd., 2007, p. 31; *Narrator*: Akın vd,

2012, p. 82). Three fundamental organizational value may be focused based on ethical, moral and positive organizational studies. The first is focusing on relationships. Creating permanent and high-quality relationships in the organization. The second is focusing on moderation. Encouraging awareness, unorthodoxy and self-control in the organization. The third is focusing on dignity/ honor. Structuring respect, justice and honesty between the leader and the members (Fehr, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In terms of organization, forgiveness can be considered as an important behavior preventing the conflicts and establishing the peace in the company. The forgiving manager gives a chance to the other person and confers the responsibility to him/her. It has been foreseen that forgiveness culture in the organization contributes to the organizational commitment, sincere behaviors in interpersonal relationships and increase in the organizational performance. Moreover forgiveness culture is thought to reduce negative organizational cynicism and vengeance. In spite of these facts, the shortage of the studies in the organizational level should be discussed. In this review study, we hope that the other researchers should also discuss this subject.

As a result of this study which has this review limitation, it is suggested that even though it is emphasized as a part of both Muslim and Turkish culture, the studies on organizational forgiveness to create positive and productive organizations should be studied more. Organizational forgiveness should be studied to use it as an intervene tool with qualitative and quantitative works and its practical applications should also be studied.