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Actual and Ideal Leadership Behavior Shift within the Last Five Years

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to compare and analyze the shift in the ideal and actual leader behaviors within five years. Therefore two studies were conducted, one during 2004-2005 and the second during 2009-2010 periods. In order to measure the perceived leader behavior and the ideal leader behavior required by the employees, Stogdill's Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire XII (LBDQ XII) was used. Sample of the Time I Study consisted of 678, and the Time II Study 789 questionnaires. Results revealed that during the last five years there are significant changes in the twelve dimensions of actual and ideal leader behaviors. While the leaders started to perform these behaviors less, the desire to have leaders showing these behaviors also diminished by employees. Even though there is a decrease in the results, when the higher order dimensions – system and person oriented behavior – calculated and compared, we still see that Turkish employees wants both system and person oriented leaders. Only the spread is not as extreme as before.

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1. Literature review

Leadership has been a fascinating concept throughout the early ages for individuals in all societies and an extensive research area for scholars. The effect of leadership styles on work processes has always been an intriguing subject for the researchers, because it is important for the organizations performance. In the literature, there are various researches dealing with leadership styles. Definitions vary in whether they are primarily descriptive or normative as well as their relative emphasis on behavioral styles. Emphasis has ranged from the leader's abilities, personality traits, to influence relationships, cognitive vs. emotional orientation, etc. Bass [1] stated that there are almost as many ways of defining leadership, as there are individuals who attempt to define the concept.

While leadership is a broad term, the essential aspects of leadership tend to focus on influence processes used in organizations – specifically in influencing employees to contribute to the attainment of organizational goals [2, 3] Theories of leadership are examined within a large conceptual range and include approaches that focus on individual differences, situational characteristics, or some combination of the two. It is also indicated that there has been significant progress from early trait and behavior-based theories to present thinking that stresses composite theories of leadership [4], although consideration of specific perspectives and particular contexts still appear in the literature [5, 6]. A primary distinction

between leadership styles relates to leaders' behaviors and subordinates' motivation. According to behavioral leadership theory, leader behaviors consist of rewards and recognition, and such leaders emphasize extrinsic motivations to shape goal setting in an attempt to strengthen organizational culture, structure, and strategy [7]. They are carefully explicit in their expectations and rewards [1].

On the other hand, in recent years, interest has been paid to a broad spectrum of leadership behaviors, as well as to their cross-cultural. In a series of studies [8, 9] leadership characteristics preferences are being assessed in national cultures using the Ohio State University Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire XII and compared across cultures [4].

It is indicated that leadership has been viewed during the history as: (1) an attribute of position; (2) a characteristic of a person; and (3) a category of behavior [10]. Although a review of the leadership literature is beyond the scope of this research, one of the two basic dimensions of leadership will be discussed in the study.

Stogdill [11] discussed the Ohio State Leadership Studies from 1945 through 1970. Several factor analytic studies produced two factors identified as *Consideration* and *Initiation of Structure in Interaction*. Stogdill [12] noted that it was not reasonable to believe that the two factors of Initiating Structure and Consideration were sufficient to account for all the observable variance in leader behavior relating to group achievement and the variety of social roles. Initiating of structure can be described as leadership behavior focused on task accomplishment with the leader supplying necessary direction, coordination, and control of the task whereas Consideration focuses more on leadership behaviors that encourage and support subordinates and their relationships. This model was subsequently revised to include 12 dimensions because two factors were not sufficient to account for all the observable variance in leadership behaviour [11]. In this context, the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) XII measures the twelve behavioral patterns

Representation measures to what degree the leader speaks as the representative of the group.

Demand Reconciliation reflects how well the leader reconciles conflicting demands and reduces disorder to system.

Tolerance of Uncertainty depicts to what extent the leader is able to tolerate uncertainty and postponement without anxiety or getting upset.

Persuasiveness measures to what extent the leader uses persuasion and argument effectively; exhibits strong convictions.

Initiation of Structure measures to what degree the leader clearly defines own role, and lets followers know what is expected.

Tolerance of Freedom reflects to what extent the leader allows followers scope for initiative, decision, and action.

Role Assumption measures to what degree the leader exercises actively the leadership role rather than surrendering leadership to others.

Consideration depicts to what extent the leader regards the comfort, well being, status and contributions of followers.

Production Emphasis measures to what degree the leader applies pressure for productive output.

Predictive Accuracy measures to what extent the leader exhibits foresight and ability to predict outcomes accurately.

Integration reflects to what degree the leader maintains a closely-knit organization; resolves inter-member conflicts.

Superior Orientation measures to what extent the leader maintains cordial relations with superiors; has influence with them; is striving for higher status.

Judge, Piccolo, and Ilies [13] attempted to identify all possible studies of the relationships between Consideration, Initiating Structure, and relevant organizational criteria. The results of this analysis indicated that the LBDQXII versions reliably and validly measured leader effectiveness and higher LBDQ scores positively associated with greater leader effectiveness ratings.

The LBDQ XII has been used in several countries to study leadership behavior [8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19] with the general finding that patterns of preferred leader behaviors vary significantly and considerably across national cultures.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the influence of national culture on leadership and management. A number of scholars have shown how cultural values and traditions can influence the attitudes and behaviors of leaders [20]. Hofstede [20] identified five dimensions of culture and demonstrated their effects on the practice and perceptions of management and leadership in different countries. Hofstede [20] implied that a form of the masculinity/femininity dimension differentiates countries, as well as individuals. “Masculinity stands for a society in which men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. The opposite pole, femininity, stands for a society in which both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” [20]. In masculine countries, decisiveness and ambition are more often seen as masculine, whereas caring and gentleness are more often regarded as feminine and in feminine cultures, all these terms are seen as applying to both men and women. In masculine cultures, assertiveness is emphasized whereas in feminine cultures, modesty is emphasized. Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla and Dorfman [21] found that while some leadership attributes and behaviors were relevant for effective leadership in all of the 65 cultures studied, some attributes varied widely in relevance.

Turkey ranks among high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance cultures. Power distance is negatively associated with leader communication, delegation, and teambuilding; and uncertainty avoidance is positively linked to leader control and negatively to delegation [20]. Turkey is also ranked above the average in values of conservatism (12th) hierarchy (5th,) egalitarian commitment (13th) and harmony (16th) in Schwartz’s research on culture level value dimensions of 34 countries [22]. Kanungo and Aycan [23] found Turkey to have paternalistic values comparable to those of China, India and Pakistan while relatively less paternalistic societies were Romania, Canada, and the USA. Similarly, Trompenaars and Hampton-Turner [24] studied 38 nations and found Turkey to have the steepest hierarchy in its organizations, indicating the wide spread subordination of employees to their leaders. Also, the researchers found that family-type organizations are pervasive in Turkey. Pasa, Kabasakal and Bodur [25] in their study, as a part of the GLOBE project, stated that hierarchical autocratic leadership behavior was found to be the most frequently observed leadership behavior in Turkey. According to the inter-country societal culture rankings for 62 cultures in the GLOBE study [26]; Turkey’s scores indicate high scores for assertiveness, family collectivism, and power distance and low score for gender egalitarianism which again supports paternalistic leadership. Paternalism includes elements of both authoritarian and nurturing behaviors where the leader behaves as a father to the followers [27, 28].

There is an important practical implication in terms of establishing a well-balanced and consistent approach between leadership style and organizational culture. Specifically, those leaders who try to practice leadership with consideration and initiation of structure in interaction might find it beneficial to choose a setting where followers hold more collectivistic and group-oriented values. In other words, when leaders try to motivate followers through behavioral leadership styles while the dominant organizational culture still emphasizes individualistic values, such a culture might create a boundary condition under which the potential effect of leadership on followers' effectiveness [29].

Moreover, Loke [30] investigated the leadership behaviors’ effects on employee and organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment. His study showed that use of leadership behaviors and employee outcomes were significantly correlated. For instance, “enabling others to act is a leadership behavior that influences others with energy and confidence, developing relationships based on mutual trust, and providing subordinates with discretion to make their own decisions” and this leadership behavior has a high positive correlation with organizational commitment [30]. This suggests that it is important for leaders to ensure that their subordinates feel strong and capable enough to make their own decisions.

One area that should be examined is the time effect besides the current leadership theories for understanding how issues of time passed play a role in the perceptions and applications of theories of leadership. Because time is considered as a key factor that has strongly impact on the leadership behaviors, the current research intended to examine time-specific factor that might have a role to create differences between the ideal and actual leadership behavior styles within Turkish context.

2. Methods

2.1. Procedure

During the 2004 -2005 period, a study was conducted to measure leadership behavior styles in Turkey. In order to observe current perceptions and applications of leadership behaviors styles, and compare with the previous results, a similar study is performed during 2009 - 2010 period. In studies, a paper and pen questionnaire was used to collect data and participation was voluntary.

2.2. Sample

The sample consisted of 678 (49.0 % females, and 51.0 % males) respondents in time 1 study and age of sample ranged between 21 to 72 with a mean of 30.86 and a standard deviation of 7.74. The sample consisted of 789 (49.3 % females, and 50.7 % males) respondents in time 2 study and age of sample ranged 19 to 63 with a mean of 31.00 and a standard deviation of 7.83. In studies respondents were chosen among employees working in managerial and non-managerial positions in Turkey. The respondents were highly educated. In the Time 1 Study 73.8 % and in the Time II Study 90.6 % were university graduates. 93.5 % of sample in time 1 study and 90.6 % of sample in time 2 study was from private sector. Work experience of respondents ranged between 1 to 45 years with a mean of 5.21 and standard deviation of 6.12 in time 1 study and ranged between 1 to 34 years with a mean of 4.95 and standard deviation of 5.48 in time 2 study.

2.3. Instrument

The instrument used to measure actual and ideal leader behavior was the Ohio State University Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire XII (LBDQ XII). The LBDQ XII developed by Stogdill [12], consists of 100 questions to measure twelve behavior styles.

3. Findings

The change in the ideal and actual leader behaviors during time 1 and time 2 studies are compared using LBDQ XII dimensions. To test if there were any differences between the perceived actual leader behaviors between respondents in 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 “independent sample t-tests were performed.

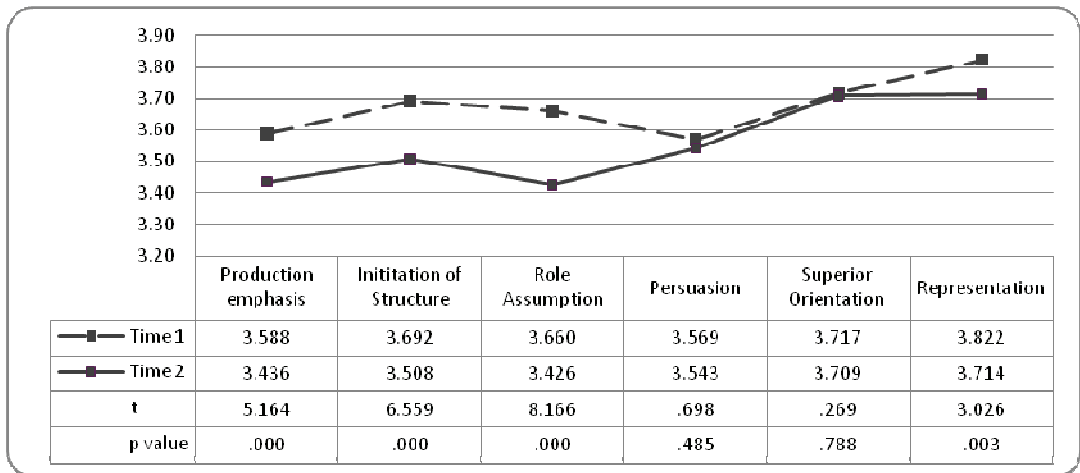


Fig. 1. Actual Leadership Behavior Profiles - System Oriented Leadership: Time 1 vs Time 2

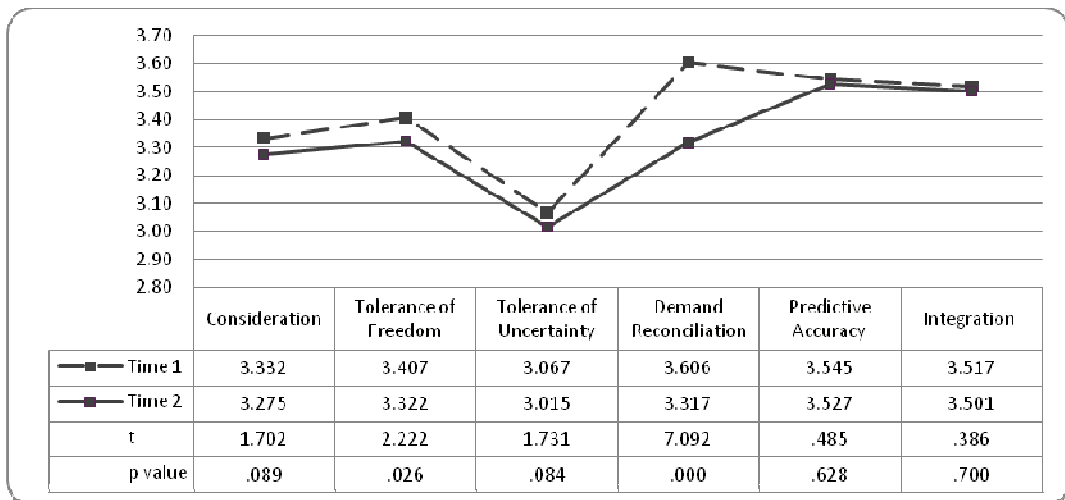


Fig. 2. Actual Leadership Behavior Profiles - Person Oriented Leadership: Time 1 vs Time

In Figure 1 and Figure 2 the differences in the actual leadership profiles perceived by the respondents are given. The results revealed that except 'persuasion' and 'superior orientation' other four system oriented dimensions have shown significant changes in the actual leader behaviors. 'Production emphasis', 'initiation of structure', 'role assumption', and 'representation' has decreased in the last 5 years ($M_{time1}=3.59$, $M_{time2}=3.44$, $p=0.00$; $M_{time1}=3.69$, $M_{time2}=3.51$, $p=0.00$; $M_{time1}=3.66$, $M_{time2}=3.54$, $p=0.00$; $M_{time1}=3.82$, $M_{time2}=3.71$, $p=0.00$ respectively). However only two person oriented leadership dimensions of LBDQ XII 'tolerance of freedom', and 'demand reconciliation' have significant differences. Like other dimensions here too values indicate a decrease ($M_{time1}=3.41$, $M_{time2}=3.32$, $p=0.00$ and $M_{time1}=3.61$, $M_{time2}=3.31$, $p=0.00$ respectively).

When the ideal leader behaviors are compared, it seen that all dimensions shifted over the last five years significantly (See Figure 3 and 4). In studies respondents were asked to rate the twelve leadership behavior dimensions to describe their ideal leaders.

In all dimensions of system oriented leadership 'production emphasis', 'initiation of structure', 'role assumption', 'persuasion', 'superior orientation', and 'representation' ($M_{time1}=3.80, M_{time2}=3.69, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.15, M_{time2}=3.85, p=0.00; M_{time1}=3.73, M_{time2}=3.47, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.38, M_{time2}=4.10, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.26, M_{time2}=3.95, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.22, M_{time2}=3.92, p=0.00$ respectively) and dimensions of person oriented leadership 'tolerance of freedom', 'tolerance of uncertainty', 'predictive accuracy', 'integration', 'consideration', and 'demand reconciliation' ($M_{time1}=4.12, M_{time2}=3.79, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.13, M_{time2}=3.95, p=0.00; M_{time1}=3.67, M_{time2}=3.51, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.41, M_{time2}=3.62, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.44, M_{time2}=4.09, p=0.00; M_{time1}=4.49, M_{time2}=4.16, p=0.00$ respectively) scores given to have decreased.

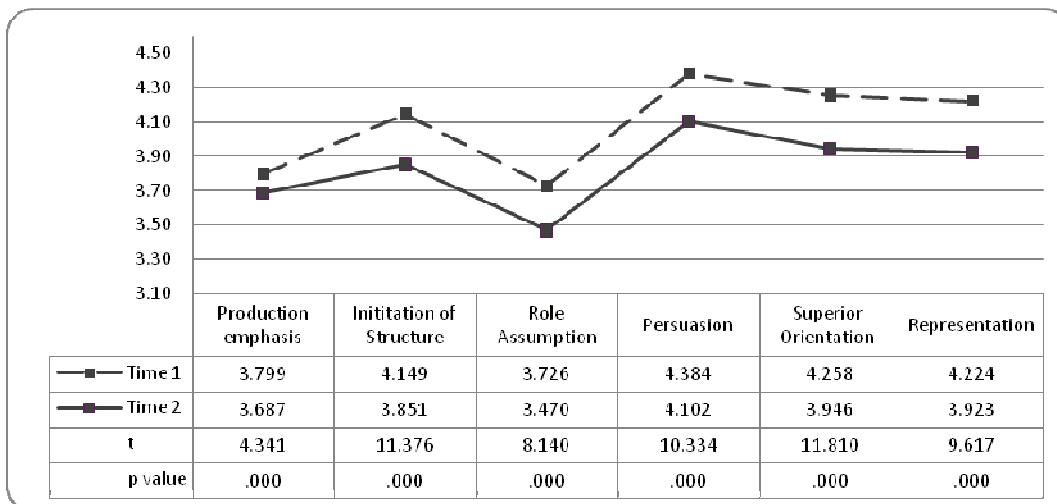


Fig. 3. Ideal Leadership Behavior Profiles - System Oriented Leadership: Time 1 vs Time 2

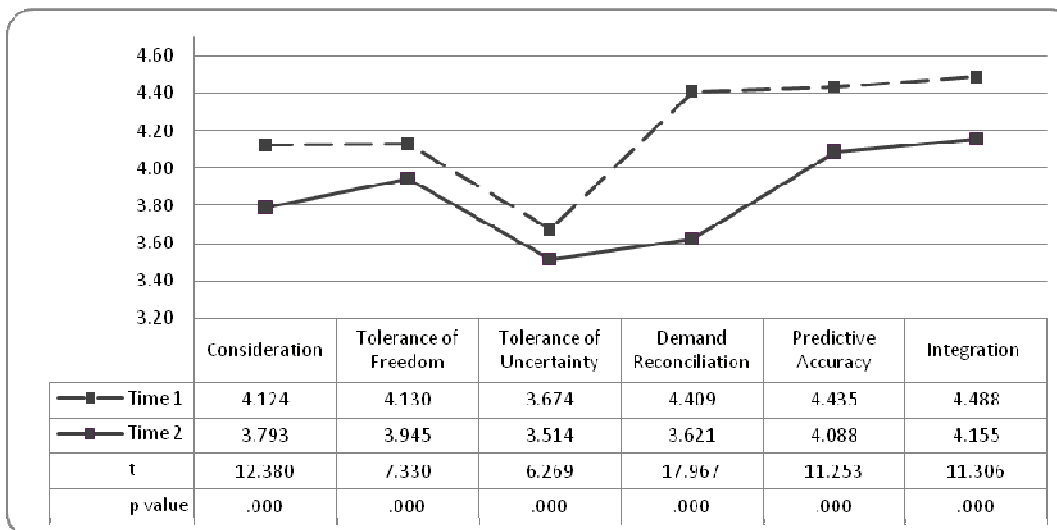


Fig. 4. Ideal Leadership Behavior Profiles - Person Oriented Leadership: Time 1 vs Time 2

The graphical representation of two-dimensional view of leadership behavior as person oriented and system oriented for actual leaders are given in Figure 5. From these matrices we can conclude actual

leader behaviors as perceived by the respondents are concentrated on high person oriented - high system oriented quadrant. However we can see a slight shift towards less person oriented area in 2009-2010 compared to 2004-2005 period.

Likewise two-dimensional view of leadership behavior as person oriented and system oriented for ideal leaders of respondents were depicted (See Figure 6). Here the concentration of scores is again on the person oriented - high system oriented quadrant and this time dispersion is even less compared to actual leader behaviors. Therefore we can conclude employees in Turkey like to have highly people and production oriented leaders which are in parallel with other finding indicating paternalism. Yet when we compare 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 scores there is a slight shift towards less person and system oriented values as we have also seen in the independent sample t-test results.

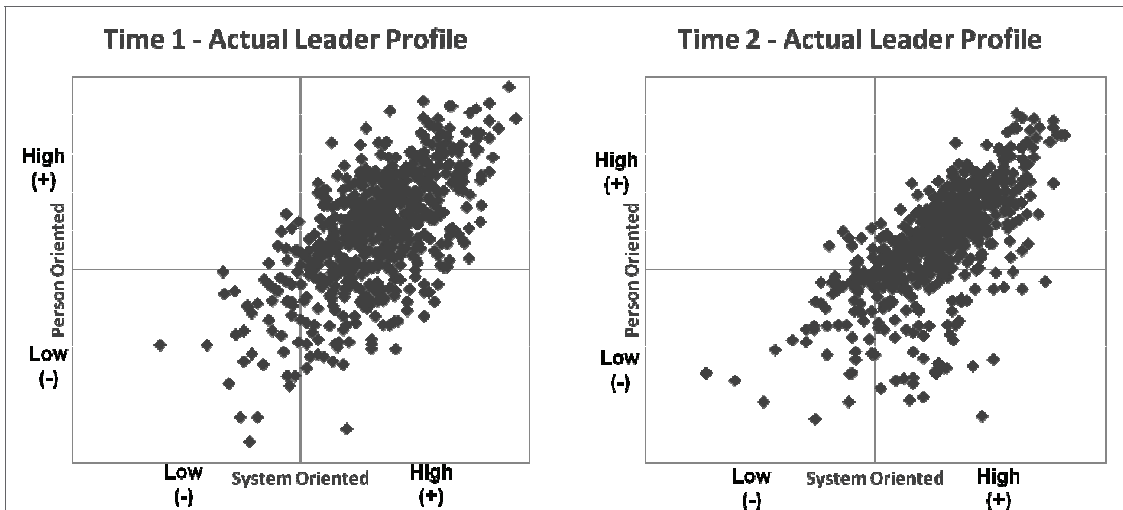


Fig. 5. Actual Leader Profile - Time 1 vs Time 2

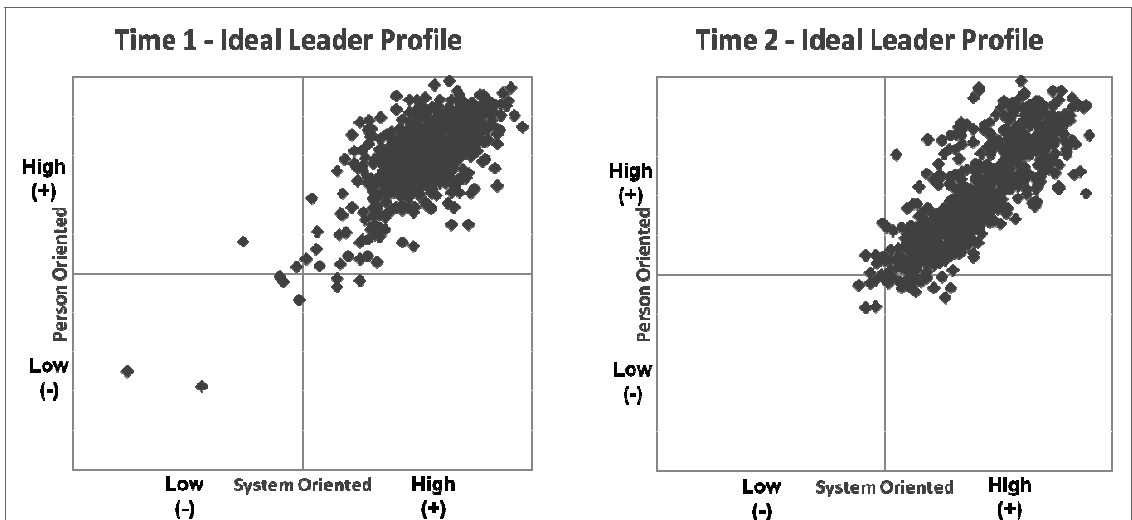


Fig. 6. Ideal Leader Profile - Time 1 vs Time 2

4. Conclusion

During the last five years, there are significant changes in the actual and ideal leader behaviors measured by LBDQ XII dimensions. On the overall, we can say there is a shift to lower values in all the ideal leader behaviors desired and in majority of actual leader behaviors perceived by respondents.

Remarkable point is that, while the leaders started to perform these behavior styles less, the desire to have leaders showing these behavior styles also diminished by employees. Even though there is a decrease in the results, when the system and person oriented behavior means plotted, we still see that Turkish employees wants both system and person oriented leaders. Only the spread is not as extreme as before.

A review of the literature revealed that leaders high in initiating structure and consideration tended to achieve high subordinate performance and satisfaction more frequently than those rated low on consideration, initiating structure, or both [31]. In addition, studies have shown higher LBDQ scores to be positively associated with greater leader effectiveness ratings [16]. According to our findings even though there is a decreasing trend, since all the ratings of LBDQ dimensions were above three on a five-point scale, we can say LBDQ dimensions were scored high. This is in line with the findings on Turkey indicating paternalistic leadership being the traditional leadership style; however, the declining trend may be an indicator of change in this traditional style. This situation can be explained by environmental, organizational, and managerial issues that have a role in the managerial approaches of the leaders. In Turkey, there has been considerable economic and political issues and crisis within the time of the research. Therefore, because of the environmental changes and requirements, the leaders might become less person and system oriented but more productivity and transaction oriented.

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