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## Conflict Management and Visionary Leadership: An Application in Hospital Organizations

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### Abstract

The “Health Conversion Program” in Turkey, initiated by 2008, revealed the need of public and private hospitals for administrators with leadership values in order to increase the service quality and to adopt changes by developing efficient processes. It is thought that the research findings will contribute for that hospital administrators will be capable to resolve any conflict due to diverse reasons without harming institutional targets and activities and to apply by adapting the visionary model.

*Keywords:* Visionary Leadership, Conflict Management, Conflict Management Style, Hospital Administrators

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### 1. Introduction

The paradigm changes that started to be faced globally by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have gained a great acceleration by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and made new regulations and changes in necessary fields mandatory (Karakas, 2006; Ateş and Çetinkaya, 2010). This situation resulted in the necessity that hospital administrators manage incurring conflicts in hospitals, which have a complex organizational structure within which individual differences are inevitable, such to serve organization targets by the visionary view of hospital administrators and to internalize conflict management styles in the institutions, to know the level of the behavior and skills of administrators in terms of conflict management (Karakas 2006; Ateş and Çetinkaya, 2010; Adair 2004; Klan 2003; Patrick, 2000).

The introduction of the visionary leadership in the health sector and the application of the appropriate conflict management style depends on the management of changes by hospital administrators, lead by chief physicians and hospital managers, increasing the moral and motivation of the personnel, adopting new roles, introduced by the change, along with their existing tasks. The behavior adopted by the leaders is important in order to increase the

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productivity of hospitals and to provide the efficiency of the functions in order to meet changing needs. The provided solutions of problems will be much easier in an institution in which; all possibilities of future are planned, diverse common targets are set, employees may verbalize their thoughts, communication is not placed secondary, and the service quality will increase (Akiş 2003; Akgemci, 2001; T.C. Ministry of Health 2003).

In this study, the conflict reasons, the visionary leadership dimensions adopted by administrators in case of a conflict, their conflict management styles and how the employees perceive these styles, whether these perceptions show any significant differences according to some variables and the relations between the perception of the employees regarding visionary leadership and their perception regarding conflict management style, the relations between the conflict reasons and the conflict management style at two public hospitals in Istanbul are determined.

## **2. Literature Survey and Hypothesis**

### *2.1. Visionary Leadership*

An organization can only survive from a conflict and the period after the conflict with the least harm by the guidance of its leaders (Aksu, 2009). For that, there is a need for a leader rather than for an administrator. In the definition of leadership, it is outlined that this is a very different notion than that of an administrator. Whilst administration is the task definition for persons, having learned the needs of the art of management, in other words, having had the education for this, leadership is the activity of persons, deemed to have the skills to see problems as a whole connaturally, able to make radical decisions without any hesitation. According to another conception; whilst the administrator seeks the answer for the question “what” regarding a result, the leader does it for the question “how” for the query towards the method in order to achieve a result (Akiş, 2003; Andrea, Bodtker, Jameson and Jessica 2003; Aksu, 2009).

The time factor, able to be differentiated as the past, the present and future, has a great importance in visionary leader management. The visionary leadership type, which aims to plan the future and to carry the organization to the best position, is a model, of which it is proposed to achieve the most productive result in order to overcome incurred and/or possible to incur conflicts with the most appropriate conflict management style (Uysal, 2004). According to the findings in performed studies, the success of a leader, even how far the leadership attributes are existent, are measured proportional to the fact how visionary this leader is. With other words, being visionary is accepted to a must of a leadership (Aksu, 2009).

### *2.1. The Need for Visionary Leaders in Hospitals*

One of the fields, in which the differentiation between leadership and administration is made very difficult, is the health sector. It may be faced with diverse problems in the management of the hospital services, constituting an important part of this sector, particularly due to that it is greatly based on human relations and makes it necessary to follow the continuously developing technology. And to overcome incurred managerial problems depends on the behavior of the leaders. The introduction of the visionary leadership in the health sector depends on the adaptation of their new roles, which come along with the change, in addition to their existing tasks like the management of the changes by hospital administrators, lead by chief physicians and hospital managers, increasing the moral and motivation of the personnel, observation of the internalization of new applications and appropriate management philosophy and techniques in their institutions and to prepare the institution for the future (Aksu, 2009; Uysal, 2004; Yiğit, 2004).

### *2.3. Organizational Conflict and its Reasons*

According to Eren conflicts are; events caused by the problems between individuals and groups in an institutions due to working together and resulting in interruption or disconcert of normal activities (Eren, 2001). According to Stoner and Freeman are disputes between individuals or groups with a functional relation between their works due to different statuses, targets, values or perceptions (Buchanan, Huczynski, 2004; James, Stoner and Freeman 1989; Friedman, 2000). And Webster has evaluated a conflict as a dissent of interests or the belief of having not reached individual targets. A conflict expresses disharmonies due to many psychological features like moral, character, the families they lived and grew in, the community, worldview, view on life of the individuals working in the organization

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