

# The Theme of Moral Leadership in the *Kutadgu Bilig*\*

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The *Kutadgu Bilig*, which is one of the most important works in Turkish cultural history, is essentially a book of moral codes relating to the governing principles of Turks. This study, which was conducted to explore the theme of moral leadership in the *Kutadgu Bilig*, has been prepared in accordance with the document review technique. In this context, the ideal characteristics of moral leaders were gathered under the headings of “respect, serving, justice, honesty and society building” and couplets in the *Kutadgu Bilig* that are directly related to these themes were identified and discussed under the related headings. We found that Kün-Togdı, representing the Turkish Bey and the Turkish moral laws in the *Kutadgu Bilig*, had the required moral leadership characteristics. Following the discussion section comparing studies on the theme of leadership in the *Kutadgu Bilig*, the study proffers various suggestions regarding moral leadership.

**Keywords:** moral leadership, *Kutadgu Bilig*, Yusuf Has Hacı, leadership, moral capital

## Introduction

Organizations, which are essentially social systems that individuals create to enable them to do work which they cannot do effectively and efficiently on their own, need effective leadership in order to achieve their goals. In this regard, leadership is critical to enable organizations to achieve their goals.

Leadership is generally considered to be one of the most important reasons for the success or failure of an organization. Leadership takes place within a group and focuses on common goals. Leaders try to realize their goals by focusing their energies on individuals trying to achieve things in a collective manner. In this respect, leadership has a moral dimension that includes values such as respect for others, being fair and building the society.

Although it is such an important issue, it is not possible to find a common definition of leadership on which all agree. According to Bass (1981), leadership is a universal issue as it is a very ancient skill that has been discussed by many from Plato to Caesar. Firstly, the concept of leadership brings to mind acts of control and the giving of orders and commands. When we look at the history of humanity, it can be seen that dominant, autocratic, totalitarian and control based leadership styles are dominant.

Traditionally, leadership is defined as the power to influence workers and spur them to action in line with organizational goals and targets (Scott, 1981). In other words, leaders inspire their followers to give up their selfish inclinations for a greater cause (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). Leadership can also be defined as influencing

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workers to achieve common goals adopted by the majority of members of an organization (Rost, 2008).

For some, leadership happens when an individual gains prominence inside a group to control social movements, while according to others it is the process whereby group members, having identified their needs and wishes, focus their energies on meeting them. As Stogdill (1974) mentions, leadership has as many definitions as those trying to define it.

In fact, the definition of leadership has changed considerably from the past to the present time. While the definitions of leadership in the 1920s emphasized centrality and the power of control, in the 1930s the emphasis was on the influential skills of leaders rather than the establishment of dominance whereby leadership was defined as the interaction between a leader's characteristics and the general structure of the group. In the 1940s, the group approach emerged for defining leadership while in the 1950s leadership was regarded as a sort of relationship developed for the realization of organizational goals. In the 1960s and 1970s, with a wider acknowledgement of the concept of group effectiveness, leadership theory transformed into an organizational behavioral approach aimed at establishing and maintaining groups or organizations to achieve organizational goals. During the 1980s there was a large increase in the number of scientific studies on the nature of leadership (Northouse, 2013).

On the basis of studies on the nature of leadership, the theories of leadership have been divided into four groups: trait theory, behavioral theories, contingency theories, and contemporary and postmodern theories.

The trait theory focuses on the individual characteristics of leaders and the qualities they possess. Leaders possess innate physical and social superiority compared to their followers. According to this theory, people who are tall, intelligent and have the ability to convince followers and manage other people have leadership qualities. The shortcomings of the trait theory gave rise to behavioral theories in the mid-20th century. According to behavioral theories, personal traits do not determine leadership but rather the attitude of the leader towards his or her followers. On the other hand, according to the contingency approach, which works on the assumption that different situations require different leadership styles, there cannot be a uniform type of leadership that fits all situations. The common feature of theories originating from this approach is that the task or relationship-based leadership style will not work in all circumstances with the two being alternately applied depending on the circumstances (Gedikoğlu, 2015).

From the past to the present, the expectations of people and societies regarding leadership have been different and diverse. In order to meet these expectations, many modern and postmodern leadership styles have emerged, such as transformational leadership, sustainable leadership, visionary leadership, distributive leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership.

According to Anello (2016), autocratic, oppressive, and arrogant leaders seen in many parts of the world throughout history tend to disempower those they are obliged to serve. It is time for us to ask ourselves some questions so that humanity can move from adolescence to maturity. First of all, can the leadership models of today produce leaders who can rise up to the challenges posed by the global problems facing humanity? Are the theories created by today's leadership models capable of creating a sustainable world civilization? Finally, are we ready to abandon our old habits and create a model of moral leadership?

As our world becomes more global thanks to advances in technology, humanity faces many risks both economic and social. In order to adapt to, and more importantly, to manage the new social order there is a need for a new leadership style that is based on moral values and principles that inspires its followers and commits its talents to the progression of society, rather than old leadership styles based on control. Moral leadership is

perhaps the most necessary form of leadership in today's world considering that leaders without a moral compass are mostly responsible for the economic and social crises that have affected the world throughout history.

### **Moral Leadership**

Morality is a collection of unwritten rules that are commonly used which affect people's attitudes, behaviors, and relationships (Güney, 2011). Morality is a system of rules that accepts or rejects the behavior of people in society as good-bad, positive-negative, beautiful-ugly (Kessler, 1985). Since morality is based on traditions and customs, the nature of the concept of morality has also changed throughout the ages and in different societies.

In fact, morality is not a matter of arbitrary intellectual choices and personal values. Morality is related to our place in the community, our understanding of nature, our beliefs about the after-life, and our assumptions about what the mind can know and what makes life meaningful. We are not merely the people of our age; we are also the inheritors of language, culture, institutions, and moral traditions. This heritage must be accurately conveyed to future generations (Jena, 2015).

Moral leadership is a type of leadership that distinguishes good from evil and right from wrong and that suggests an acknowledgement of human values to its followers and places the concepts of right, law, and justice at the center of government (Güney, 2015, p. 350). Moral leaders adopt principles of honesty, integrity, equality, law, transparency, accountability, and justice, and use them in their decision-making processes to ensure that the principles of business ethics are fully embedded in the corporate and community culture. There are many personal and social motivational elements that lead moral leaders to behave in this particular way. First among such motivational elements are the individual's outlook on life and beliefs. A person who believes in absolute truth does not compromise on righteousness, honesty, and the rule of law as he or she considers the repercussions of their deeds in both worlds and avoids encroaching upon other people's rights.

Moral leadership is a leadership style that recognizes the importance of values and attitudes in decision-making. This leadership style requires managers to engage in reflective practices using their own values and attitudes to make decisions. According to Sergiovanni (1992), moral leadership is a process in which the brain and the heart work together to make good decisions. According to him, the brain is part of a system of rules, regulations, and application theories. While the heart is part of a whole that is empowered by the values that the leader believes and values.

The core of moral leadership is to be a good person. Although the definition of a good man is different for everyone, in general, a good person is someone who speaks the truth, makes good on his word, is fair, and respects others. According to Aristotle, a person with good morals displays the virtues of courage, generosity, self-control, honesty, sociability, humility, truth, and justice (Velasquez, 1992).

The use of authority and power within an organization imposes many moral obligations on a leader. Leadership is essentially a set of practices with a moral dimension. Morality plays an important role in the creation and development of organizational values by a leader. For every leader has a different perspective on life and a different set of values. For this reason, leaders play an important role in the establishment of a moral climate within their organizations. In short, morality is of great importance in leadership because of the nature of the process of influencing and its influence on followers.

Moral rules form the basis of unity, togetherness, and solidarity in a society. Moral leaders are embraced by their followers when they take moral values into consideration when making decisions. Moral leaders solve problems by eliminating immoral attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, they must instill moral awareness in their followers (Güney, 2015).

Davis (2008, p. 42) considered moral leadership together with transformational leadership, servant leadership, value-added leadership, and spiritual leadership as models of ethical leadership. According to Burns (1978) who posited the theory of transformational leadership, leadership is a process in which a leader and his followers prop up each other's morality and motivation. These leaders use ideals such as equality, freedom, justice, and peace to raise the consciousness of their followers through moral values. Greenleaf's (1970) concept of servant leadership advocated the idea that the main responsibility of the leader was to serve his subordinates. According to Greenleaf, a leader serves his subordinates by helping them develop and endowing them with powers. A leader should be responsive to the needs of his or her subordinates and encourage them to take responsibility.

The foundations of authority in today's concept of leadership are mostly based on technical fluency resulting from bureaucratic, psychological, or theoretical studies. Emphasizing these three pillars causes us to neglect professional and moral authority which we call the additional foundations in our leadership practice (Sergiovanni, 2015).

Güney (2006), who considers the concept of moral leadership in terms of business management, states that non-ethical behaviors such as making unfair gains, not fulfilling one's tax liability to the state, and considering personal interests when recruiting and promoting people cause companies damage as they have a moral basis as much as an economic one.

Güney (2015) outlines the basic behavior pattern of moral leaders as follows:

- Leading by example;
- Guidance of followers through a moral vision;
- Respecting the rule of law;
- Respecting the rights of their followers;
- Acting according to ethical principles in business and social life.

Anello (2006) stated that moral leadership had four basic capabilities. Accordingly, the first trait of moral leadership is continuous learning in order to enable people to reach perfection both intellectually and spiritually. Learning should not be perceived as a process that begins with words and ends with words; the moral responsibility of the individual in science and art should be acknowledged. Learning supports efforts to serve the common good.

The second trait of moral leadership concerns educational activities. It refers to sharing acquired wisdom, knowledge, and skill with others. A true moral leader knows that the greatness and progress of a nation is directly related to the level of education of its people.

The third trait is internal discipline and self-control. Leaders without internal discipline do not make an effort to attain noble goals. After a while they become the victims of their own temporary passions and corrupt tendencies.

The last trait of moral leadership is to recognize the truth and obey it. The core basis of moral behavior is the recognition of and obedience to truth. A true moral leader never puts himself above the law. A moral leader understands the importance of the law in the development and maintenance of a civilized and just society.

As cited in *Surah Nahl Verse 90*: “Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded” (Yazır, 2002, p. 270), there is a serious emphasis placed on upholding values of morality. In one of his hadiths, Prophet Muhammad says “Dear Allah, I beseech you to bestow upon me good health, welfare and good morals” (Gazali, 2018, p. 118) placing good morals at the center of his prayers. In this sense, moral leadership has an important place in Islam.

In the entire world, concerns about pollution, insecurity, instability, and the future are increasing. Places where values such as trust, honesty, responsibility, love, tolerance, impartiality do not flourish constitute a threat to all people (Açıkalın, 2016). The need for moral leadership in social, political, and cultural life increases steadily in our postmodern world where values have lost their meaning.

According to Anello (2006), a moral leader has 18 talents:

- They encourage other people and create joy in their hearts.
- They lovingly disseminate their thoughts and deeds.
- They have a vision and encourage others to have a vision.
- They carry out their responsibilities honestly.
- They assess their strengths and weaknesses.
- They resist their own selfish tendencies by turning their attention towards the higher purposes of creation.
- They take responsibility for solving problems.
- They overcome obstacles with determination.
- They transform superior relations into relations of interdependence and service.
- They act as a catalyst for the creation of justice.
- They contribute to the realization of educational activities both as a student and as a teacher.
- They learn by thinking systematically about their actions.
- They think systematically when looking for a solution.
- They are open to new ideas.
- They maintain unity while supporting diversity.
- They use their abilities in the service of humanity.

Leadership has always been an important issue throughout Turkish history. Bey is the head of the state and he is responsible for law and order in his country. He ensures public peace by running the country according to traditions. The fact that the city where the Bey resides is called “Ordu” (Army) is illustrative of how closely the bey is associated with the state. The *Kutadgu Bilig*, penned by Yusuf Has Hacib in 1069 and presented to Tabgaç Buğra Khan, the ruler of the Karahan state, is the first political treatise in the Turkish language.

In fact, the *Kutadgu Bilig* is a book of ethics written to guide beys and statesmen. Written in Hakaniye Turkish, the work is didactic in terms of discussing and explaining the leadership characteristics expected from the Turkic Khan. The work, which consists of four main characters, is a mesnevi of 6,645 couplets.

The *Kutadgu Bilig* was written with the purpose of raising generations to represent the Turkish nation and has been a source of state tradition and customs for the Turkish nation for more than a thousand years, helping to pass those traditions and customs down to future generations. The four main characters in the *Kutadgu Bilig* and the concepts they represent are as follows (Kaya, 2017):

- Kün-Togdı: Ruler. Represents traditional laws.
- Ay-Toldı: Vizier. Represents happiness.

- Ögdülmiş: Sage. Represents the mind.
- Odgurmuş: Dervish. Represents fate.

### Methodology

The study involves the use of the document review method which is one of the qualitative research methods. Qualitative research uses qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview, and document analysis and follows a qualitative process whereby perceptions and events are reflected in a realistic and holistic way in their natural environment. On the other hand, the document analysis technique is the examination of written materials that provide information about the facts or events that are intended to be investigated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

For this purpose, we have identified couplets about leadership in the *Kutadgu Bilig*. Couplets reflecting Northhouse's (2013) principles of moral leadership "respect, serving, justice, honesty and society-building" were collected under headings and analyzed.

### Results

The *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) has always had a privileged place in Turkish cultural history as the first known mesnevi and political treatise in Turkish Literature. Yusuf Has Hacib presented this work to Tabgaç Buğra Khan, who was the ruler of the Karahanid state, the first Muslim Turkish state in Central Asia, to enunciate the basic principles which should be taken into consideration by the state administration through conversations between four main characters.

The *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) first begins with mutual talks between the ruler Kün-Togdı and the Vizier Ay-Toldı. Kün-Togdı asks various questions of Ay-Toldı which he skillfully answers following which he is promoted to the office of the Vizier to serve the people night and day. Ay-Toldı, who does outstanding work during his tenure, sees his efforts reward the country by becoming stable and prosperous. But after a while, the vizier becomes ill. Kün-Toğdı thanks the vizier, now struck down by an incurable illness, for his services. During this conversation, Ay-Toldı tells the ruler that he has a son who is just as clever and industrious as himself. After a short while, the vizier dies.

Kün-Togdı summons the vizier's son, Ögdilmiş. They have a conversation and exchange ideas. Ögdilmiş also receives approval with his answers to the ruler's questions and takes over his father's role. After a while, the Bey asks Ögdilmiş if he knows about other people who are smart and hard-working like himself. And Ögdilmiş takes this opportunity to tell him about Odgurmuş. Leaving the life of a reclusive dervish away from other people, Odgurmuş initially refuses to answer the ruler's summon. Ögdilmiş visits Odgurmuş one more time and finally convinces him to see the ruler. And the mesnevi ends with a conversation between Kün-Togdı and Odgurmuş.

According to Northhouse (2013), moral leadership has five principles. Accordingly:

#### Moral Leaders Respect Others

The concept of respect, which manifests itself through feelings of affection associated with value, superiority, old age, or usefulness and so enabling us to act with care, attention, and measure towards others, (TDK, 2017) is defined as the avoidance of disturbing others in social life and treating others with respect and modesty whatever our position or role. Respect comes before all else in the Turkish tradition.

In terms of leadership, respect refers to trusting and supporting other people's ideas. Respect is the effort made by a leader to listen carefully to his subordinates' opinions and to understand them. A moral leader's respect for his followers manifests itself in modest, tolerant, and supportive attitudes towards them.

The following are some select couplets from the *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) related to the concept of respect:

- 546- Rulers must have a soft temperament and a noble demeanor and composure.
- 547- Those with a dominant role in society must have a sweet tongue and show modesty.
- 2115- A Bey must not be haughty, rowdy, or conceited; pride leads people astray from the true path.
- 2118- When Beys become conceited and throw their weight around, my son, they will definitely fall from grace.
- 2119- Pride does not take you high above the skies; and modesty does not put a spanner in the works.
- 2120- Pride is useless; it distances others from you; modesty elevates.
- 2121- A Bey must be modest and humble; give him a wide berth if he is not so.

As subordinates or followers are respected and trusted, they muster the courage to discover their own abilities. In short, respect is an important value in terms of leadership as it makes employees feel valued and establishes trust between the leader and the followers.

### **Moral Leaders Serve Others**

In terms of leadership, the basis of the principle of service is formed by sacrifice. According to the servant leadership theory posited by Greenleaf (1970), a leader supports his followers in order to help them achieve the best they can and empowers them through the principles of listening, empathy and unconditional acceptance of others. The principle of serving others, which is at the heart of moral leadership, is based on the principle of self-sacrifice for a higher purpose.

The following are some select couplets from the *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) related to the concept of serving others:

- 856- The Ruler said: The benefit of being a good person is being useful; such a person does many good deeds for the people.
- 945- You are worthy of the service of everyone; the door to welfare is opened if the worthy ones are served.
- 947- Do not serve; and if you will, serve those worthy of it; a worthy Bey knows to appreciate his servants.
- 5306- Work and steer clear of hell; always do good deeds, and God will protect you.
- 5359- O governing ruler, shine like the sun; let your people eat bountifully thanks to you.
- 5360- God has entrusted you with a prized possession; watch over it as he will call you to account for it.

Since the people are regarded as having been entrusted to the Bey by God, the Bey's service to people is considered as a divine order and necessity. By working day and night for his people, a Bey ensures their welfare on earth and his own in the afterlife. The work describes a good person as being useful and the Bey is advised to do good deeds.

### **A Moral Leader Is Just**

According to the concept of justice, which is defined as ensuring that all rights provided by the law are exercised by all (TDK, 2017), moral leaders should make it a priority to treat all their subordinates equally (Northouse, 2013). From an organizational point of view, the concept of justice is addressed within its

distributional, operational, and interactive dimensions (Cihangiroğlu, Şahin, & Naktiyok, 2010). Accordingly, distributional justice focuses on the distribution of material interests within the organization, transactional justice on the participation of individuals in the decision-making process and interactional justice on investments made in interpersonal relations. According to the *Kutadgu Bilig*, a Bey can be fair by ensuring that everyone benefits equally from the state's resources and ensuring that all are equal before the law. Fairness is not a matter of personal choice for the Bey but rather a necessity brought on by customs or the law.

The following are some select couplets from the *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) related to the concept of fairness:

- 811- I make short work of things when it comes to dispensing justice.  
 817- Whether it be my own son, a relative or kin, or a passenger, just passing through or a guest.  
 818- To me they are all equal before the law; I make no discrimination between them when passing judgement.  
 827- The sun rises and the world is illuminated; it makes all people partake of its brightness, and it loses nothing.  
 828- So it is with me and my judgements; I do not disappear, my deeds and words are the same for all my people.  
 831- The sun rises and brightens everything clean or dirty; and it loses nothing by doing so.  
 832- And so this is how I act, everyone gets his share of me.  
 2171- A Bey must be superior to the rest in all virtues and treat his people with respect.  
 3107- The law is like water; cruelty, like fire, destroys everything; you poured clean water and the fire went out.  
 5288- O Bey, try to enforce the law to the greatest extent possible and try to give the public their due.  
 5944- Look and see how good this law is; a chiefdom can only survive with the rule of law.

In the *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005), it is not a coincidence that the name Kün-Togdı (sun) is used to represent the Bey. According to the *Kutadgu Bilig*, which is an allegorical mesnevi from a literary point of view, Bey represents a fair leadership profile that reaches out to everyone with his justice like the sun and does not discriminate.

### **A Moral Leader Is Honest**

Morally righteous people are honest. The concept of honesty encompasses many ideas such as truthfulness, openness, and sincerity. And being honest is the first and most important condition of being a good person in social life. The peaceful co-existence of organizations and societies is largely based on mutual trust. Honesty plays an important role in the formation of that trust. Moral leaders are honest. In this way, they do not countenance insincerity or dishonesty.

The following are some select couplets from the *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) related to the honest leaders:

- 453- Oh the fortunate whose face glows with joy, if a man acts with honesty, then that Bey is a very good man.  
 809- I handle all work with honesty; I do not discriminate against people separating them as Beys or subjects.  
 819- The basis of this chiefdom is honesty; when the Beys are honest, the world will enjoy peace.  
 821- The foundation of this chiefdom is honesty; the path of honesty is the fundamental basis of a chiefdom.



- 822- If a Bey is honest and rules over his chiefdom with honesty, he has all his wishes fulfilled.
- 825- Look at the sun; it does not shrink in size; it always maintains its integrity, glowing with the same brightness.
- 826- And so is my nature; it is full of honesty and it is never diminished.
- 2037- Oh ruler, the worst that can befall a Bey is a reputation as a liar.
- 5230- Keep those known for their honesty, sincerity and goodness close to you and see they work for you.
- 5285- Rule at all times with honesty, a chiefdom can only survive with the rule of law.

### **A Moral Leader Builds the Society**

Since leadership is a moral process that enables a leader to act in line with certain organizational goals by influencing their followers, there must be a common goal that the leader and the followers seek to achieve. The ultimate goal of moral leadership is to build a moral society in which common goodness prevails. In such a society based on truth, honesty, justice, and respect, leaders do not give orders to their followers but serve them, inspiring them rather than berating them. In the *Kutadgu Bilig*, the improvement of society is possible through the self-improvement of the Bey.

The following are some select couplets from the *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) related to society building:

- 5200- Oh the ruler of these lands, goodness should start within you before asking others to be so.
- 5202- The Beys are the head; wherever the head goes, so do all his followers.
- 5204- Work on your own manners first; and the public will follow.
- 5205- If you want to do things worthy of yourself, refrain from doing things that are not; that's it.

The *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005) sets out four ways to become a Bey respected and loved by the entire nation:

- 5902 These four things are essential, if you wish to remain a popular Bey, god willing, at all times.
- 5903 The first is speaking the truth; the second is applying the rule of law in state governance.
- 5904 The third is being generous and charitable, and showing compassion towards the public.
- 5905 The fourth is making your enemy bow down and being determined and courageous in managing state affairs.

In the *Kutadgu Bilig* (2005), the public has three claims over the Bey.

- 5574 The public has three claims over you; fulfill them and do not make your people fall upon hard times.
- 5575 The first of these is to keep the silver in your country clean, keep it pure, o wise man.
- 5576 The second is rule over your people with just laws; do not let one try to dominate the other, preserve them.
- 5577 The third is to keep all roads safe, eliminate all highwaymen and thugs.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Since 1825 when the first study was made on the *Kutadgu Bilig*, there have been many studies on the work spanning a broad geography extending from China to Turkey. To quote from Halil İnalcık (2000, p. 260), "The work, infused with Islamic values, was written to show guidance to people needing to be happy in both worlds and to reinstate moral principles in Central Asia shaken due to internal strife".

Through four main characters and using the question and answer method, Yusuf Has Hacib listed in the *Kutadgu Bilig* the characteristics of the ideal statesman for the Karahanid Ruler, and provided explanatory information about what a successful Bey should do. In addition, these conversations between the four characters included the job descriptions of all persons working for the rulers, from the scribe to the stable boy.

The most important reason why the *Kutadgu Bilig* includes the theme of moral leadership is due to the spiritual weight of the Prophet Muhammad placed upon Turks who chose Islam. After all the best example of a moral leader is the Prophet Muhammad. Considering his personality and the period in which he lived, the Prophet Muhammad displayed almost all the moral leadership skills that Anello (2006) puts forward.

In fact, this is not a *tewafuq* that emerged after centuries, but rather a conscious choice. The Prophet Muhammad's hadith which reads "I was only sent to define good morals (Muvatta, Husnū'l Halk, 8; Müsned, 2/381)" highlights that conscious choice in the best way possible. The sentence "And indeed, you are of a high moral character" from verse 4 in Qalam surah (Yazır, 2002) also corroborates this way of thinking.

In his *Kutadgu Bilig*, it is highly likely Yusuf Has Hacib who had the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad in mind when defining the profile of future Turkish rulers and statesmen as the ruler of the Karahanid state. Northouse's (2013) principles of moral leadership coincide with the characteristics of Bey as described in the *Kutadgu Bilig*. In that case, one sees that Kün-Togdı, representing the Bey in the *Kutadgu Bilig*, displays the stated moral leadership characteristics.

Sarıkaya (2014) examined the characteristics of the Bey in the *Kutadgu Bilig* through the themes of "forgiving, generous, patient, faithful, virtuous, modest, unpretentious, free from bad habits, sweet-tongued, truthful, cautious, good tempered and well-built".

Kaya (2017) examined verses in the *Kutadgu Bilig* relating to leadership under seven titles which are "being just, being intelligent and wise, being selfless and generous, being reliable and honest, being courageous and resolute, being tolerant and considerate, being cautious and prudent".

In this study, the verses in the *Kutadgu Bilig* were collected under the titles "respect, serving, justice, honesty and society-building", characteristics which a moral leader must have according to Northouse (2013) to reveal cultural codes on moral leadership. Although the work revolves around four main characters, it is clear that the work was written to instill moral values in the rulers and Beys of the Muslim Turkish states through the character of Kün-Togdı. Analyzing the *Kutadgu Bilig*, which has been the subject of many studies until the present time, in terms of moral leadership will pave the way for studies on different leadership themes in the work.

### Recommendations

1. The codes of moral leadership can also be looked at in other works of Turkish literature, such as *Hayriyye* by Nabi.
2. A study could also be made on the servant-leadership theme concerning the characteristics of the Bey as told in the *Kutadgu Bilig*.
3. A study can be made on other cultural codes besides leadership in the *Kutadgu Bilig*.
4. UNESCO included in its 2019 program the "950th Anniversary of the Writing of the *Kutadgu Bilig* by Yusuf Has Hacib". And this in itself warrants multi-faceted studies into the *Kutadgu Bilig*.

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