

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT IN THE IMPACT OF PASSION FOR WORK ON SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

İŞ TUTKUSUNUN SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİR REKABET AVANTAJINA ETKİSİNDE ALGILANABİLİR ÖRGÜTSEL DESTEĞİN ARACI ROLÜ

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Abstract: The research was conducted to investigate the relationship between work passion, perception of organizational support and sustainable competitive advantage. Internet interviews were conducted with 406 academics from 18 foundation universities in Turkey. Based on these interviews, the effects of academics' work passion on sustainability and Perceived organizational support were analyzed. Passion for work is closely related to the performance of academics. This research focuses specifically on the concept of passion for work in academics. Harmonious passion, one of the sub-dimensions of this concept, positively affects perceived organizational support and sustainable competitive advantage. Obsessive passion, another sub-dimension of work passion, has negative effects on these two variables. Furthermore, the study also explores the mediating role of perceived organizational support to help increase sustainable competitive advantage. The aim is to reveal the extent to which work passion affects sustainability. In addition, it is another aim to reveal whether this situation increases the impact on sustainability when added to the model as a perceived organizational support tool. As an important point, it has been seen that perceived organizational support does not have a mediating role in the effect of obsessive passion on sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: Sustainability, Passion for Work, Perceived Organizational Support, Harmonious Passion, Obsessive Passion

JEL: M10, M19

Öz: Araştırma, iş tutkusu, örgütsel destek algısı ve sürdürülebilir rekabet avantajı arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Türkiye'deki 18 vakıf üniversitesinden 406 akademisyen ile internet üzerinden görüşme yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerden yola çıkarak akademisyenlerin iş tutkularının algılanan örgütsel destek ve sürdürülebilirlik üzerindeki etkileri analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma tutkusu akademisyenlerin performansı ile yakından ilişkilidir. Bu araştırma, özellikle akademisyenlerde çalışma tutkusu kavramına odaklanmaktadır. Bu kavramın alt boyutlarından biri olan uyumlu tutku, algılanan örgütsel destek ve sürdürülebilir rekabet avantajını olumlu yönde etkilemektedir. İş tutkusunun bir diğer alt boyutu olan saplantılı tutku ise bu iki değişken üzerinde olumsuz etkilere sahiptir. Ayrıca, çalışma, sürdürülebilir rekabet avantajını artırmaya yardımcı olmak için algılanan örgütsel desteğin aracı rolünü de araştırmaktadır. Amaç, iş tutkusunun sürdürülebilirliği ne ölçüde etkilediğini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Ayrıca algılanan örgütsel destek aracı olarak modele eklendiğinde bu durumun sürdürülebilirlik üzerindeki etkiyi artırıp artırmadığını ortaya koymak bir diğer amaçtır. Bu aracı değişken ile oluşturulan araştırma modellerinde de benzer sonuçlar görülmektedir. Önemli bir nokta olarak saplantılı tutkunun sürdürülebilir rekabet avantajı üzerindeki etkisinde algılanan örgütsel desteğin aracı rolünün olmadığı görülmüştür.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Sürdürülebilirlik, İş Tutkusu, Algılanan Örgütsel Destek, Uyumlu Tutku, Saplantılı Tutku

1. Introduction

In this study, perceived organizational support with the mediating role was examined in the effect of work passion on sustainability. The aim is to reveal to what extent business passion affects sustainability. In addition, when the perceived organizational support is added to the model as a mediator, it is another purpose of the research to observe whether this situation increases the impact on sustainability.

In developing countries such as Turkey, it is very difficult to find someone who works with passion. The main reasons for this are economic and political instability, financial difficulties, poor quality of education at all levels, lack of reading habits, the inability of individuals to complete their personal development, and, accordingly, inability to realize their potential. Also, an important part of the managers in business life is not professional and the negative situations experienced in the workplace also negatively affect the motivation of the employees and prevent them from revealing their potential.

All these difficulties experienced within the borders of the country are encountered in the academic world as in every field. Due to these reasons, it was aimed to reveal this negative picture not only as an interpretation but also with research. As a result, in order to talk about the clarity of a situation in the academic world, it is the most important element to reveal it with research. It is hoped that these studies will inspire academics and professionals in the business world.

2. Literature Review

The efforts of the managers and members of the organization to support and motivate each other are very important for the organization to benefit from these people. However, the important point here is that these people perceive and interpret this organizational support positively. In other words, for events and situations occurring within the organization to gain meaning, that is, to be perceived, a process that the individual interprets as a result of his emotional impressions must emerge (Robbins et al., 2013: 146). The meanings that organization members attach to the situations and events that occur around them in their business and daily lives also affect their behavior. In short, people are affected by environmental factors, they produce thoughts according to their perception of events and situations, and as a result, they reveal behaviors that affect their environment (Erdoğan, 1996: 82). Perceived organizational support is considered as the assurance that the organization member can get help from the organization when he/she has to perform his / her job effectively and cope with stressful situations (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002: 698). At this point, it is very important for the organization members to know that they can get help from the organization and to feel the members of the organization behind it for its performance and sustainability. The perceived concept of organizational support, which has reached a high level with attention especially on the fields of psychology and management since the 1990s, is an increasingly important force in today's business life based on the intensive and complex network of relationships. Especially in today's global markets where economic problems and crises are seen intensely, the sustainability of organizational and individual sustainability is of critical importance.

The perceived organizational support concept, which is of such great importance, is very important for the sustainability of organizations. Because even if the members of the organization face some psychological problems, the perception that they are supported by the organization can positively affect their motivation and thus their commitment to work and job satisfaction (Aube et al., 2007: 479).

Passion for work is one of the most researched and emphasized concepts of today and is closely related to management support. Vallerand et al. (2003: 760) mention two different aspects of passion (Amiot et al., 2006: 221). The first of these, harmonious passion, is an autonomous internalization state in which individuals control their passions and can freely perform their duties unconditionally (Philippe et al., 2010: 917; Ho et al., 2011: 31). Obsessive passion represents the dark side of passion. Here, internal and interpersonal processes that are not under the control of the individual come into play and a controlled internalization occurs. Harmonious passion is based on an autonomous internalization between the activities performed and the individual (Vallerand et al., 2003: 762). Accordingly, the individual contributes positively to the sustainability and performance of the company by participating in the activities voluntarily. In short, it has been stated that harmonious passion positively correlates with overall positive emotionality and psychological adjustment and psychological adjustment indexes (Vallerand et al., 2006: 454; Vallerand et al., 2007: 505).

In contrast, obsessive passion causes the individual to do business with negative feelings in participating in activities. Especially, the emergence of a higher level of the workload with the increase of environmental dynamics and factors fuel this feeling. Harmonious passion, which is the light face of the concept of passion, is described as the best experience or optimal situation in which the individual is intensely involved in activities and participates spontaneously without effort (Gülbahar and Karadal, 2018: 51).

The study carried out by Phillippe et al. (2010: 917), in the context of passionate activity, it was seen that harmonious passion was positively related to the quality of interpersonal relationships, whereas an obsessive passion was not related to it. It was also another result of the study that positive feelings experienced in the workplace fully mediates the relationship between harmonious passion and the quality of interpersonal relationships. With this context, it is possible to say that harmonious passion develops quality relationships between people at work. It should also be noted that having positive emotions has positive effects with this relationship. A positive effect should be expected in the relationship between harmonious passion and perceived organizational support. Because of the perceived concept of organizational support is a result of the quality relationship between the manager and the employee. It is possible to say that obsessive passion is a concept far from establishing quality relationships. Because this passion, which develops depending on the intensity of the work, causes the individual to experience problems within the organization.

Luu (2019: 326) stated that employees who are treated fairly and feel valued, regardless of their different backgrounds, can develop their passion for their jobs and participate in service innovations. Accordingly, it is possible to say that people who feel valuable through perceived organizational support may increase their passion for their jobs. According to Ho et al. (2011: 26), employees with compatible passion perform better at work. Employees with an obsessive passion do not have a significant relationship with job performance. Hao et al. (2018: 112) found that empowerment leadership had a positive indirect relationship with employee job performance through

a harmonious work passion and a negative indirect relationship with employee job performance through an obsessive work passion. This result, like the others, puts a strong emphasis on the importance of perceived organizational support.

The longevity of businesses depends on perceived organizational support as well as a sustainable management approach. For this, organizations must have a sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations try to achieve this by turning to their internal structures, which cannot be easily imitated by competitors. In other words, organizations try to create a sustainable competitive advantage through the business establishment, innovation, strategic renewal, and proactive behaviors within the existing organization. However, over time, these inimitable features will begin to be imitated by competitors, so they must be constantly renewed. In short, the most important features of sustainability are continuous improvement and renewal (Kaygin, 2012: 93).

According to Lindsey and Mitchell (2012) there are many different characteristics that a leader of the future should have in an organization. These;

- The leader of the future must be an independent thinker who understands the market and follows developments,
- The leader of the future must have the passion to serve customer needs,
- The leader of the future must have the qualifications of a change agent for the organization he is in,
- The leader of the future should be able to motivate and inspire talent,
- The leader of the future must have the ability to maintain a high quality organization and build a lean organization.

All these features are of great importance in today's business world, but they are not enough on their own. In order for the organization to have a sustainable competitive advantage, it is very important to support each other at all levels of the organization. Therefore, the research model was designed depending on these situations.

3. Research Design

3.1. Measures

Multi-item scales were used to measure constructs accepted in previous studies to test the following hypotheses. Each structure was measured by using the seven-point Likert scale, ranging from “absolutely disagree” (1) to “absolutely agree” (7).

The passion for work scale used in the analysis (Vallerand et al., 2003: 756) consists of two dimensions as harmonious passion and obsessive passion and 14 expressions.

These items are as follows

Harmonious Passion Dimension

1. My job allows me to have a variety of experiences.
2. The new things I discover within the confines of my work make me appreciate it even more.

3. My job allows me to have unforgettable experiences.
4. My work area reflects the qualities I like in myself.
5. My job is in harmony with other activities in my life.
6. A passion for me that I still manage to control.
7. I am completely interested in my job.

Obsessive Passion Dimension

1. I can't live without my job.
2. The urge is very strong. I can't stop myself to do my job.
3. I have a hard time imagining my life without my job.
4. I am emotionally dependent on my job.
5. I have trouble controlling my need to do my job.
6. I have a feeling of obsessive about my job.
7. My mood depends on my ability to do my job.

The perceived organizational support scale (Eisenberger et al., 1986: 500) used as a mediator variable in the study consists of eight items and one dimension. The items of the scale are as follows:

1. My institution really cares about my well-being.
2. My institution strongly considers my goals and values.
3. My organizer pays very little attention to me.
4. My institution gives importance to my ideas.
5. My institution is willing to help me when I need a special favor.
6. I get help from my institution when I have a problem.
7. My institution forgives an honest mistake.
8. My organization benefits from me if given the opportunity.

Finally, the sustainable competitive advantage scale, which is used as the dependent variable in the article, was developed by (Tokgöz, 2016: 63). This scale consists of one dimension and seven items. The items of the scale are as follows:

1. When we look at our competitors, we are more profitable and have a higher growth rate.
2. When we look at our competitors, we have a higher growth rate in sales revenues.

3. When we look at our competitors, our operating costs are lower than our competitors.
4. When we look at our competitors, our product quality is better than them.
5. When we look at our relationship with our competitors, it is seen that our market share is increasing gradually.
6. When we look at our competitors, we have more profitable old customers.
7. When we look at our competitors, we have a more profitable portfolio of new customers.

3.2 Hypothesis Development

In the light of all this information, the hypotheses of the research are presented as follows:

H₁: Passion for work has a positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage.

H_{1a}: Harmonious passion has a positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage.

H_{1b}: Obsessive passion has a positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage.

H₂: Passion for work has a positive effect on perceived organizational support.

H_{2a}: Harmonious passion has a positive effect on perceived organizational support.

H_{2b}: Obsessive passion has a positive effect on perceived organizational support.

H₃: The perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between passion for work and sustainable competitive advantage.

H_{3a}: The perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between harmonious passion and sustainable competitive advantage.

H_{3b}: The perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between obsessive passion and sustainable competitive advantage.

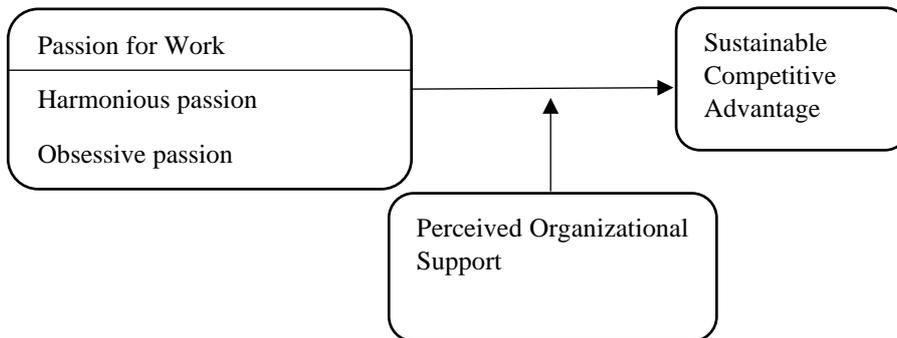


Figure 1. Theoretical Model of the Research

3.3. Sampling

406 academics were interviewed via the Internet from 18 foundation universities in Turkey. Based on these interviews, the effects of academicians' job passions on sustainability and Perceived organizational support was analyzed. In this context, an average of 20 questionnaires were requested from each university and the total number of questionnaires reached exceeded the target. The demographic characteristics of the academicians who contributed to the analysis are given in the table below.

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample

Variables	Frequency	(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	263	64.8
Female	143	35.2
<i>Age</i>		
20-29	136	33.5
30-39	208	51.2
40-49	41	10.1
>50	21	5.2
<i>Education</i>		
University	21	5.2
Master's	227	55.9
PhD	158	38.9
<i>Title</i>		
Lecturer	106	27.1
Assistant Professor	126	31.1
Associate Professor	72	17.6
Professor	102	25.1
<i>Experience (year)</i>		
0-5	114	28.1
5-10	208	51.2
10-20	61	15.1
20-30	23	5.6

3.4. Analysis

The reliability of the study was evaluated with composite scale reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, and average variance obtained (AVE). As seen in Table 2, CR and Cronbach's alpha values were found to exceed 0.70.

It has been determined that all values are above 0.50 in AVE values. Also, it is seen that the correlation values between variables are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha, reliability, AVE, average, standard deviation and correlation values

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Harmonious Passion	5.32	1.23	1			
Obsessive Passion	2.82	1.37	-0.56**	1		
Perceived Organizational Support	5.46	1.36	0.64**	-0.58**	1	
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	5.47	1.23	0.49**	-0.46**	0.54**	1
		α	0.92	0.86	0.88	0.95
		CR	0.93	0.82	0.91	0.93
		AVE	0.67	0.74	0.72	0.76

As a result of the regression analysis, it is seen that all values are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. In addition, these variables have an effect of 46% on the dependent variable ($R^2: 0.467$).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Sig.	t	β	R^2
Harmonious Passion	0,000	8,667	0,429	0,467
Obsessive Passion	0,000	-9,293	-0,396	
Perceived Organizational Support	0,000	10,305	0,682	

3.5. Hypothesis Testing

In the light of the analyzes carried out, it is seen that the harmonious passion variable (H_{1a}), which is the sub-dimension of passion for work, has a positive effect ($\beta= 0.54$, $p<0.01$) on sustainable competitive advantage. On the other hand, the obsessive passion variable (H_{1b}), another sub-dimension of passion for work, has a negative effect ($\beta= -0.42$, $p <0.01$) on sustainable competitive advantage. According to these results, it is seen that the H_1 hypothesis is partially supported.

Considering the H_2 hypothesis, it is possible to say that the harmonious passion variable (H_{2a}), which is the sub-dimension of job passion, has a positive effect ($\beta= 0.63$, $p<0.01$) on perceived organizational support. However, the obsessive passion variable (H_{2b}), another sub-dimension of work passion, has a negative effect ($\beta= -0.32$, $p<0.01$) on perceived organizational support. According to these results, it is observed that the H_2 hypothesis is partially supported.

Regarding the H_3 hypothesis of the study, three conditions put forward by (Baron and Kenny, 1986: 1179) were taken into account in the analysis of the mediator variable. These;

1. The independent variable should affect the mediating variable.
2. The independent variable should affect the dependent variable.
3. When we add the mediating variable to our regression analysis with the second step, if there is a non-significant correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the full mediation effect; If there is a decreasing effect in the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, it is possible to say that there is a partial mediation effect.

In the regression analysis made according to the first condition, the effect of the harmonious passion variable, which is the passion for work sub-dimension, on the perceived of organizational support variable ($\beta= 0.63$, $p <0.01$) was analyzed. According to the regression analysis made to fulfill the second condition, it was seen that the harmonious passion variable, which is the passion for work sub-dimension, affected the sustainable competitive advantage variable ($\beta= 0.54$, $p <0.01$). At this point, it is also seen that the R^2 value is 0.27. In the analyzes made according to the last condition, the effect of the harmonious passion variable, which is the passion for work sub-dimension, on the sustainable competitive advantage variable ($\beta= 0.39$, $p <0.01$) did not lose its meaning. However, with the decrease in the relationship between the two variables, Perceived organizational support variable has a partial mediating role in the effect of harmonious passion, which is the sub-dimension of passion for work, on sustainable competitive advantage variable (H_{3a}). At this stage, it is seen that the R^2 value is 0.39. The increase in R^2 from 0.27 to 0.39 with the intervention of the intermediate variable explains the degree of the positive power of the intermediary variable in the model.

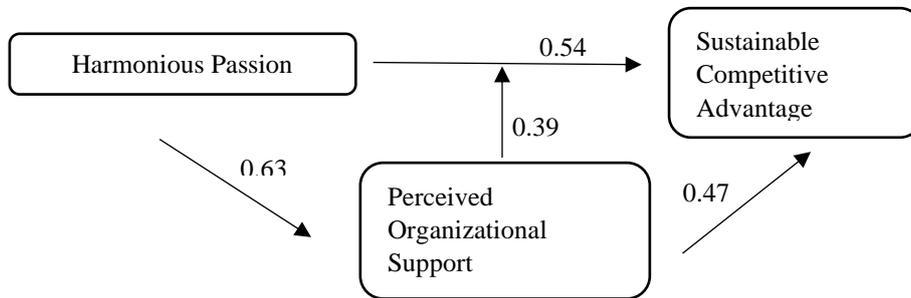


Figure 2. Mediation Effect of the Model According to the Harmonious Passion Variable

Looking at the analyzes related to obsessive passion, the other sub-dimension of passion for work, according to the regression analysis performed in the context of the first condition, the effect of obsessive passion on the perceiving organizational support variable ($\beta = -0.32$, $p < 0.01$) is significant. As a result of the analysis made according to the second condition, the effect of obsessive passion on sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$) also showed significance. At this point, the measured R2 value was determined as 0.21. As a result of the analysis made based with the third condition, the effects of obsessive passion variable, which is the sub-dimension of passion for work, on sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta = -0.33$, $p < 0.01$) did not lose its meaning, but it was observed that the intensity of the power between the two variables increased. Based on these results, it was determined the perceived organizational support variable did not have a partial mediating role on the effect with obsessive passion, which is a sub-dimension of passion for work, on sustainable competitive advantage (H_{3b}). The R2 value was determined as 0.14, and it was observed that the intermediary variable reduced this value from 0.21 to this level. This explains that the model is not meaningful when an intermediary variable is added to the model. According to these analyzes, the H_{3b} hypothesis is not supported. In general, the H_3 hypothesis was partially supported.

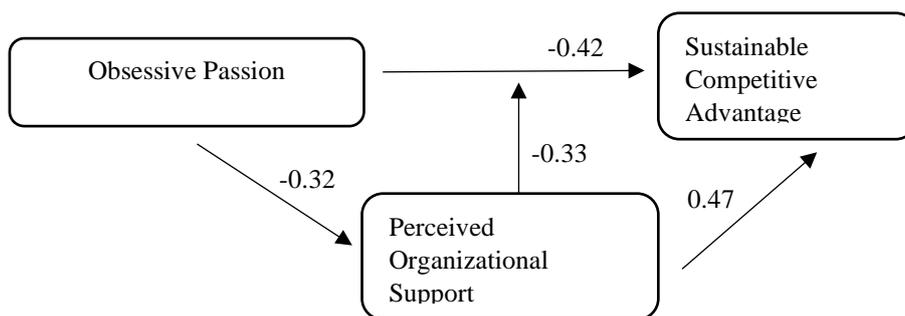


Figure 3. Mediation Effect of the Model According to the Obsessive Passion Variable

In the light of all this information, the hypotheses of the study were concluded as can be seen in the table below:

Table 4. Hypothesis Results

Relationships	β Values	Sub Hypothesis Results	Hypothesis Results
HP \longrightarrow SCA OP \longrightarrow SCA	0.54 -0.42	H _{1a} : Supported H _{1b} : Not Supported	H ₁ : Partially Supported
HP \longrightarrow POS OP \longrightarrow POS	0.63 -0.32	H _{2a} : Supported H _{2b} : Not Supported	H ₂ : Partially Supported
HP \longrightarrow POS \longrightarrow SCA OP \longrightarrow POS \longrightarrow SCA	0.39 -0.33	H _{3a} : Supported H _{3b} : Not Supported	H ₃ : Partially Supported

4. Results

4.1. Discussion

In this research shows that harmonious passion has a significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage. Studies which are about harmonious passion show that harmonious passion is negatively associated with anxiety and depression, while it is positively associated together with psychologic well-being indicators like life satisfaction, meaning of the life, positive impact and vitality (Carpentier et al., 2012: 501). According to these it can be possible to say that harmonious passion will create positive effects on sustainable competitive advantage. In short, harmonious passion is a very important competitive advantage for organizations. In contrast, obsessive passion is a prediction of higher levels on depression and anxiety, but is either negatively related or unrelated to positive indices (Philippe et al., 2009: 91, Rousseau and Vallerand, 2003: 197). Based on this information, obsessive passion should either negatively affect or have no effect on sustainable competitive advantage. The study shows that reveal that obsessive passion negatively affects sustainable competitive advantage. These results are also in line with the inferences in the literature. In the light of all these results, it is possible to say that the H₁ hypothesis is partially supported.

Ho et al. (2018: 112) stated that harmonious passion will positively affect task performance and interpersonal assistance. At this point, it is necessary to mention the perceived organizational support variable that we use in the research. Interpersonal cooperation within the organization should be not only among the members of the organization, but also between the director and the members of the organization. Accordingly, harmonious passion is expected to positively affect perceived organizational support. The findings of the study are consistent with these results. Forest et al. (2011: 27) point out that obsessive passion spreads negative mental health directly into the organization. Under these conditions, it is not possible to talk about any support within the organization. In order to prevent this situation, it is very important that the members of the organization operate in positive working conditions and that the communication channels are open. Accordingly, it is possible to say that obsessive passion does not support perceived organizational support. In this context,

it is possible to say that the research results are in parallel with the literature. In short, the H₂ hypothesis is partially supported.

Finally, similar results are seen in the two models of the research created with the mediator variable. Perceived organizational supports have a mediated role with the effect of harmonious passion on sustainable competitive advantage. On the other hand, perceived organizational support does not have a mediating role in the effect of obsessive passion on sustainable competitive advantage. In the light of the information in the literature, it is possible to say that the results are in line with the previous studies. Accordingly, the H₃ hypothesis was partially supported.

4.2. Conclusion

The research was conducted to investigate the relationship between work passion, perception of organizational support and sustainable competitive advantage. Passion for work is closely related to the performance of academics and is a concept that can take the academic world to advanced levels. This research highlighted previous contributions from academics discussing factors affecting sustainable competitive advantage. This research focuses especially on the concept of passion for work in academicians and harmonious passion, which is one of the sub-dimensions of this concept, positively affects the perceived organizational support and sustainable competitive advantage. On the other hand, obsessive passion, another sub-dimension of passion for work, has negative effects on these two variables. Also, the study identifies the mediating role of perceived organizational support to help increase sustainable competitive advantage. At this point, it has been determined that perception of organizational support has a mediated role in the effect of harmonious passion on sustainable competitive advantage. However, no evidence perceived organizational support has a mediated role with the effect of obsessive passion on sustainable competitive advantage. Harmonious passion positively affects the activities in organizations with the contribution of perceived organizational support, and accordingly, the performance of academicians increases. This situation positively reflects on the sustainable competitive advantage. However, despite the contributions of perception of organizational support, obsessive passion cannot play a role in enhancing performance, and it cannot be said to contribute to sustainable competitive advantage. Based on the results, the study suggests that harmonious passion is positively correlated with academics' performance. For this reason, university administrations should assume a supportive role for academics and provide training and incentives related to academic studies.

Depending on the academics working in the universities of developing countries, the first suggestion is to raise awareness among academics by emphasizing the importance of the concept of passion for work in such jobs. The aspects of this job related to producing publications and using creativity can encourage them through educational programs to increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of academicians. One of the important ways for humankind to be immortal is the works he added to the literature. In this context, similar arguments can be used to increase passion for work in individuals. Passion for work and support from managers can help create a sustainable competitive advantage over other major foundation universities. These things increase the efficiency of the employees and they do their best. Employees are passionate about making a business successful if they are committed to their work, so they should be given full independence and authority to make business decisions that yield better results.

Another important point of the study is that university administrations should be compelled to make retention policies in an optimal way and to create strategies related to them in order to consolidate and gradually enlarge the social and administrative implications, the relationship between business passion and sustainable competitive advantage.

The importance of developing intellectual capital to improve employees' performance is widely recognized. Currently, developing countries' universities probably need to identify and use the human capital of employees. Recognizing individual weaknesses and strengths and how they can be improved will enable academics to perform better in the future.

4.3. Limitations and Future Research

In this study, simple random sampling method was used for data collection. Instead, collecting similar numbers of samples from more universities will ensure a homogeneous distribution of the data. The sample size of the study is normal. Working with a larger sample may yield different results. Also, these studies were performed only with the foundation universities in Turkey. The model can be repeated by increasing the target audience. Finally, the realization of the study by adding different variables to the model can contribute to the emergence of more comprehensive results.

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