

The Moderator Role of Organizational Silence in the Effect of Perceived Support on Individual Creativity and Internal Brand Value: An Application on Marketing Managers in Telecommunication Sector

Algılanan Desteğin Bireysel Yaratıcılık ve İçsel Marka Değeri Üzerindeki Etkisinde Örgütsel Sessizliğin Düzenleyici Rolü: Telekomünikasyon Sektöründe Pazarlama Yöneticileri Üzerine Bir Uygulama

Abstract

In competitive industries, the effectiveness of employees in marketing departments is crucial for business success. Employees' perceived support and silence behaviors can influence their individual creativity and perceptions of internal brand value. This study aims to explore the impact of perceived support on creativity and internal brand value perceptions among employees in managerial roles within marketing departments in the telecommunications sector, while examining the moderating role of acquiescent silence. The research involved 197 employees. Results showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational support and individual creativity, as well as between organizational support and internal brand value. The moderating role of acquiescent silence was observed in the relationship between individual creativity and internal brand value, and between organizational support, leader support, and individual creativity. However, leader support did not significantly affect creativity or brand value, and acquiescent silence did not moderate the effect of support on brand value.

Özet

Rekabetçi sektörlerde, pazarlama departmanlarındaki çalışanların etkinliği iş başarısı için çok önemlidir. Çalışanların algıladıkları destek ve sessizlik davranışları, bireysel yaratıcılıklarını ve içsel marka değeri algılarını etkileyebilir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, telekomünikasyon sektöründeki pazarlama departmanlarında yönetici rolündeki çalışanlar arasında algılanan desteğin yaratıcılık ve içsel marka değeri algıları üzerindeki etkisini araştırmak ve aynı zamanda kabullenici sessizliğin düzenleyici rolünü incelemektir. Araştırmaya 197 çalışan katılmıştır. Sonuçlar, örgütsel destek ile bireysel yaratıcılık arasında ve örgütsel destek ile içsel marka değeri arasında pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Bireysel yaratıcılık ile içsel marka değeri arasındaki ilişkide ve örgütsel destek, lider desteği ve bireysel yaratıcılık arasındaki ilişkide kabullenici sessizliğin düzenleyici rolü gözlenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, lider desteği yaratıcılığı veya marka değerini anlamlı bir şekilde etkilememiş ve desteğin marka değeri üzerinde kabullenici sessizliğin düzenleyici etkisi tespit edilmemiştir.

Introduction

The telecommunications sector is rapidly developing in parallel with innovations in ICT technologies. As new applications that facilitate human communication are implemented, the structure of the sector becomes increasingly differentiated and expansive. The growth in the number of subscribers to communication services is one example of these developments. Among the most widely used telecommunication services in Turkey, the number of fixed telephone subscribers reached 9.4 million, broadband subscribers totaled 94.2 million (19.8 million fixed, 74.4 million

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mobile), and mobile subscribers reached 92.9 million (BTK, 2024). In response to the growing demand, more companies are entering the sector. Currently, 455 companies are operating in Turkey's telecommunications sector (BTK, 2024). The increase in the number of companies brings heightened competition. In this intensely competitive environment, firms attempt to influence customer purchasing decisions through marketing activities such as advertisements and promotions to shape customer attitudes and behaviors (Addeh et al., 2022:2). Within the context of service delivery, factors such as line activation times, prices, quality, complaint resolution times, and the presentation skills of service personnel affect customer decision-making processes, leading to positive or negative perceptions of the service provider (Bhattacharyya & Dash, 2022: 280). The service provider's effectiveness, reliability, responsiveness, and communication methods can significantly support customers, with success in these areas indicating high service quality (Bibi et al., 2024: 52). Through customer satisfaction, service providers can influence repurchase behavior and encourage customers to speak positively about the product or service to others (Bansal et al., 2021: 719). Research conducted by Colorado and Mesias in the telecommunications sector in 2022 concluded that customer expectations positively and significantly affect service quality, which in turn positively and significantly affects customer satisfaction. However, due to dissatisfaction, customers may choose to switch providers, transferring their dissatisfaction to other potential users and influencing their decisions as well (Googerchi et al., 2024: 3). Customers switching service providers represents a significant loss for companies, as they lose previously acquired customers to competitors every year (Sana et al., 2022: 2). To reduce these losses, service providers offer contracts lasting 12 to 24 months. If customers withdraw during this period, they are required to pay a financial withdrawal fee, which serves as a binding mechanism for the company (Yang et al., 2020: 1391-1392). Furthermore, firms compete by conducting customer needs analyses, performing systematic customer data analysis, establishing strong communication channels with customers, and implementing customer-oriented approaches by marketing employees (Chang et al., 2024: 3). However, these efforts alone are insufficient for a company to gain a competitive advantage. The effectiveness of marketing employees is also a key factor. The intangible nature of services and the need for personalized sales make it difficult for customers to select the service that best fits their needs. Here, the capabilities of marketing employees play a crucial role in bridging this gap and making customers feel secure. Educated, knowledgeable, and skilled employees with high job satisfaction can provide excellent support to customers (Inoyatova & Isakov, 2022: 1088). Employees with high job satisfaction can accurately assess customers' needs and demands through mutual communication and play a vital role in customer acquisition by offering products that suit the customers' budgets (Yazıcı & Akyüz, 2023: 526). Marketing employees need to develop innovative behaviors to perform their jobs more effectively. This can contribute to the firm's competitive advantage (Muchungu & Mutua, 2024: 40). The pressure caused by sectoral competition alone leads to challenges for employees in their work. Overcoming these difficulties and accomplishing their tasks efficiently can be facilitated with management support (Gichuhi et al., 2023: 108). The complex nature of services, combined with their heavy reliance on technical infrastructure, demands substantial knowledge in the field. Collecting, processing, accumulating, and utilizing information through internal applications and sharing it with employees requires the establishment of a robust knowledge management system (Al Ahbabi et al., 2018: 2; Khan et al., 2020: 230). Additionally, the internal processes developed by the firm for its employees can contribute to the company's success in the sector by creating an environment that allows employees to showcase their individual talents more effectively (Ishaque and Shahzad, 2016: 234). George & Bajbair (2021) found that human resource practices positively and significantly influence employee engagement in their study of employees in the telecommunications sector. In this context, it can be argued that the perceived support from the company can foster a positive attitude towards the company by encouraging employees to exhibit positive work behaviors (Yazıcı & Akyüz, 2024).

Marketing managers in companies can make managerial decisions to determine the future strategies of the company by evaluating the competitive structure of the sector. Making the right

decisions in business life is important for the continuity of success. When past research conducted in the telecommunications sector is analyzed, it is observed that the internal dynamics of companies have not been evaluated at the managerial level with a focus on marketing and competition. Within the scope of this research, the effect of organizational and leadership support perceived by marketing managers serving in the telecommunications sector on their individual creativity and internal brand perceptions was investigated. In addition, the moderating role of organizational silence (acquiescent) in this effect was examined. The results to be obtained will reveal the situation that marketing managers face during business management. They will show how internal dynamics are perceived and how these perceptions influence efforts to achieve success in a competitive sector. The results will provide a scientific basis for determining more effective strategies for future planning.

1. Conceptual development and hypotheses

1.1. Literature review

Since the information technology sector involves products with high technical specifications, employees need to enhance their knowledge, experience, and skills to meet customer demands effectively. The managerial support they perceive within the company is a key factor in helping them develop these capabilities (Wolverton et al., 2022: 2470). When employees perceive high levels of support, they can perform their tasks more efficiently; conversely, when support is low, their work tends to be less effective (Utami et al., 2023: 152). Technological advancements continue to introduce more complex business processes in the workplace. The support employees perceive can help them navigate these complexities. Positive interactions with immediate managers can significantly impact their individual development (Sandhu & Al Naqbi, 2023: 1696). Additionally, organizational support, in the form of procedures and resources, can help employees maintain a positive attitude toward the brand value of the company (Raj, 2021: 286). As a result of the literature review conducted for this research, it is evident that numerous studies have examined the potential consequences of perceived support within the company. The following table provides a brief summary of these studies, including the variables used and the findings.

Table 1. Literature Review

Author	Variables	Result
Aldabbas et al., 2021	Organizational support => Individual creativity	Positive and significant effect was found.
Choi et al., 2021	Lider-member exchange => Innovative behavior	Positive and significant effect was found.
Esguerra et al.,2022	Etical leadership => Creativity	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Organizational support => Creativity	Positive and significant effect was found.
Hadi et al., 2024	Digital leadership => Innovative work behavior	Significant effect was not found.
	Organizational support => Innovative work behavior	Positive and significant effect was found.
Li et al., 2023	Visionary leadership => Employee creativity	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Organizational support => Employee creativity	Positive and significant effect was found.
Rubiyanta and Sunaryo, 2023	Organizational support => Employee creativity	Positive and significant effect was found.
Utami et al., 2023	Organizational support => Employee engagement	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Organizational support => Employee performance	Positive and significant effect was found.
Dahle & Urstad, 2022	Lider-Member exchange => Reputation strategy embeddedness	Positive and significant effect was found.

	Lider-member exchange => Brand-congruent behaviour	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Lider-member exchange => Brand development participation	Positive and significant effect was found.
Gulati et al., 2023	Lidership=> Brand identification	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Lidership=> Brand commitment	Significant effect was not found.
Lee et al., 2023	Perceived organizational support => Brand citizenship behavior	Significant effect was not found.
Rahman et al., 2022	Brand spesific leadership => Employee brand building behaviour	Positive and significant effect was found.
Raj, 2021	Internal brand => Affective commitment (transformational leadership moderator)	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Internal brand => Normative commitment (transformational leadership moderator)	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Internal brand => Continuance commitment (transformational leadership moderator)	Significant effect was not found.
Sethi et al., 2023	Leader-Member exchange=> Job crafting behaviour	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Perceived organizational support => Job crafting behaviour	Positive and significant effect was found.
Sun et al., 2021	Management support => Individual learning opportunity	Positive and significant effect was found.
	Organizational encouragement => Individual creativity	Positive and significant effect was found.
Özbağ, 2014	Supervisor support => Individual creativity	Significant effect was not found.
Sandhu & Al Naqbi, 2022	Transformational and transactional leadership => Individual creativity	Significant effect was found.
Bordbar et al., 2019	Submissive and defensive silence => Human resource productivity	Negative and significant effect was found.
	Peaceful silence => Human resource productivity	Significant effect was not found.
Dallı & Sezgin, 2022	Organizational support => Organizational silence	Negative and significant effect was found.
Kim & Song, 2023	Organisational silence => Innovative work behaviour	Negative and significant effect was found.
Turunç et al., 2018	Transformational and conditional rewarding leadership => Organizational support (acquiescent, defence)	Negative and significant effect was found.
	Transformational and conditional rewarding leadership => Organizational silence (prosocial)	Positive and significant effect was found.
Yücekaya, 2019	Organizational silence => Self-reported individual performance.	Negative and significant effect was found.

The literature review reveals that the relationships between the variables in the research model have been explored in previous studies. In the following section, the definitions of the relevant variables and the development of the hypotheses regarding their relationships are presented.

1.2. Internal Brand Value Perception

In business, companies primarily focus on external marketing activities to increase their market share. However, for sustainable competitive advantage in highly competitive sectors, marketing employees must be at the forefront of competition-driven activities (Fernandes et al., 2023: 2). The ability of customer relations employees to effectively align customer needs with the company's services provides a competitive edge. This alignment helps customers recognize the brand, particularly when employees embrace the organization's business processes and prioritize the company's brand value in their communication with customers (Goud & Sheena, 2021: 2). The quality of services provided by an organization shapes customers' perception of the brand, while marketing strategies and practices during service delivery reflect the effectiveness of marketing

employees. The execution and success of these marketing strategies influence how employees perceive the brand's value (Saini et al., 2022: 1196). Various internal processes, such as training, development, compensation, rewards, empowerment, internal communication, and organizational business operations, play a key role in shaping employees' perceptions of the internal brand value of the company (Al Samman & Mohammed, 2020: 848).

As such, marketing employees' perception of internal brand value results from the interaction between human resource management practices and marketing strategies. This interaction contributes to competitive advantage by enhancing brand loyalty (Qureshi et al., 2022: 2). The perception of internal brand value reflects employees' sense of belonging to their organization and is closely tied to their fit within their department or team (Nazuk et al., 2023: 3). The company's service delivery methods shape employees' internal brand perceptions, which in turn fosters a customer-oriented mindset (Du Preez et al., 2017: 2). From a human resources perspective, it can be argued that marketing employees should hold positive internal brand perceptions to effectively manage customer relationships (Raj, 2021: 286).

1.3. Individual Creativity

At the individual level, creativity is defined as the personal ability to generate the most appropriate idea, process, or solution to solve a problem (Perry-Smith, 2006: 86). Individual creativity is influenced by one's work motivation, knowledge of the functional characteristics of services, and the ability to perform these tasks (Wolverton et al., 2022: 2473). In a fast-paced work environment, employees often face various challenges. With the rapid evolution of technology, both market and business structures are changing, which can lead to more complex job tasks (Chae & Choi, 2019: 421). Employees must navigate these complexities by collaborating with internal or external stakeholders. Often, the solution to arising problems depends not on standardized procedures, but on the individual's capability (Beloeva, 2021: 45).

In the field of information technology, job procedures typically require specialized expertise in the services provided. This expertise stems from employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (He et al., 2022: 1036). Furthermore, the relationships employees build with colleagues across departments, as well as with support units providing services, play a key role in their job success (Hundschell et al., 2020: 1603). According to social exchange theory, the support employees receive through the relationships they develop with colleagues, managers, and their environment influences their attitudes and behaviors toward work (Vila-Vazquez et al., 2020: 2). In the absence of work-related support, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be negatively affected, leading to a decline in individual creativity (Amari, 2023: 4).

Employees with a proactive approach and the ability to generate innovative ideas are able to deliver quality service by understanding organizational business processes (Slatten et al., 2020: 2). Another factor influencing the emergence of employees' individual capabilities is managerial support. Positive managerial support fosters the development of key traits, such as risk-taking, bold decision-making, calmness in crisis situations, and the ability to find rational solutions to complex business problems (Sun et al., 2021: 657).

Employees who feel motivated within a positive organizational climate, integrated with business processes, and supported by management are better equipped to align with the company's competitive strategies (Özbağ, 2014: 23).

Employees with high individual abilities in the information technologies sector contribute to a productive working environment within the organisation's innovative climate, especially in settings where open communication and information sharing occur rapidly in a competitive context (Sandhu and Al Naqbi, 2023: 1696). High levels of social interaction influence mutual communication methods and can enable employees to generate creative business ideas (Kurniawanti et al., 2023: 4). A creative climate is effective in helping employees adapt to company culture. Employees who manage their work effectively, make and implement decisions, and achieve successful results are more likely to exhibit positive behaviours toward the company (Navarrese et al., 2014: 440). This, in turn, reinforces their loyalty and enhances their perception of the company's brand value (Duarte et

al., 2021: 3). The ability of marketing employees in the telecommunications sector to adopt the company's business processes and demonstrate performance that reflects their individual talents can foster a positive attitude toward the organisation's internal brand value. Within this framework, the following hypothesis was developed.

H₁: Individual creativity of marketing managers has a positive and significant effect on internal brand value.

1.4. Organizational Support

In highly competitive sectors, commercial success is largely dependent on the effective involvement of employees in business processes. By unlocking the potential of employees, internal management systems contribute to a competitive advantage by facilitating work (Jeong et al., 2024: 23083). For sustainable success, however, organizational management processes must align with employees' understanding of their roles. When employees psychologically feel part of the organization, it reflects in their attitudes and behaviors (Yu, 2024: 14852). The ability of employees to successfully carry out their tasks within the organizational climate enhances their ability to build strong relationships with stakeholders by positively influencing their emotions (Deniz & Kocabaş, 2024: 53).

According to social exchange theory, employees are in constant interaction with management, which influences their work life and manifests in their attitudes and behaviors (Eisenberger et al., 1986). To adapt to their organization, employees must align with the organizational culture and work conditions. Furthermore, effective communication and management quality must meet employees' expectations (Bratha & Ali, 2024: 624). The level of support perceived by employees plays a crucial role in fostering a positive attitude toward the organization, helping them demonstrate successful work management and leverage their individual abilities (Eisenberger et al., 1997: 812). In contrast, negative perceived support can lead to withdrawal behaviors and stress-related tension (Eisenberger et al., 2020: 102). Therefore, employees' ability to fully utilize their talents is closely tied to the support they perceive (Kulachai et al., 2023: 407).

A strong bond between the organization and employees is formed when the tools and resources necessary for service provision facilitate employees' work (Ashfaq et al., 2024: 5). In the telecommunications sector, which involves complex technical services, organizational support systems must enable marketing employees to leverage their individual competencies in order to manage services that satisfy customers and create a competitive advantage (Le & Ha, 2023: 459). By combining the support they receive with their personal skills, employees can demonstrate a creative work management process that contributes to the company's goals (Elshaer, 2024: 4).

When employees can align their personal values with the organization's, they are better able to form long-term, positive relationships. As a result, their commitment to the company may grow, positively influencing their perception of the company's internal brand value (Tan et al., 2024: 17869). In turn, marketing employees can contribute to the company's success by capitalizing on these opportunities. Based on these insights, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₂: Organizational support perceived by marketing managers has a positive and significant effect on internal brand value.

H₃: Organizational support perceived by marketing managers has a positive and significant effect on individual creativity.

H₄: Individual creativity mediates the effect of organizational support perceived by marketing managers on internal brand value.

1.5. Leader Support

According to social exchange theory, the behavioral outcomes resulting from formal or informal interactions within an organization are shaped by mutual obligations and psychological contracts between managers and employees, ultimately fostering work commitment (Kashyap & Kang, 2024: 3). Leaders play a critical role in employee motivation, as their behaviors often serve as a model for employees to follow (Lopez-Zapata et al., 2024: 3). Managers act as role models for employees, guiding how to approach their work. Their attitudes and behaviors can significantly impact

employees' well-being in the workplace, which in turn affects how employees interact with their environment (Baker, 2023: 285).

Furthermore, their interactions with employees and other support units help enhance customer satisfaction by ensuring timely service delivery (Feng & Adams, 2023: 1324). Telecommunication services, given their technical complexity, require effective communication between marketing personnel and management to meet customer needs efficiently (Ismail et al., 2024: 29). By supporting open communication and offering formal and informal training, leaders can help employees develop the knowledge necessary to understand the sector, products, and competitors' offerings (Nakanishi, 2024: 284).

The positive work management approach provided by leaders encourages employees' commitment to organizational processes (Nie et al., 2024: 387). As long as the perceived support enables employees to perform their work in a more structured manner, it can trigger extra-role behaviors and foster creative thinking (Sethi et al., 2023: 4264). In a competitive industry, employees' innovative and proactive behaviors are key to acquiring new customers (Wang et al., 2022: 2). Creative employees often find solutions to emerging problems, thereby maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction (Wolverton et al., 2022: 2470).

Employees' creative behaviors in complex business processes are deeply influenced by the psychological support provided by their immediate managers (Maliakkal & Palmon, 2023: 111). Moreover, the management style adopted by leaders also affects employees' sense of trust. When employees trust their managers, they are more likely to make bold decisions (Monteiro et al., 2022: 690). Marketing employees who maintain positive relationships with their managers are more likely to adopt organizational processes and perform effectively (Windeler & Reimenschneider, 2016: 160).

Employees who have a good relationship with their managers exhibit higher levels of energy toward their work and their environment. Satisfied employees are not only more committed to their workplace, but they also tend to speak positively about the company and its services (Anjum & Prasad, 2023: 70). Those who can build a relationship with their managers based on ethics and mutual respect are more likely to achieve success in their roles and experience higher job satisfaction (Okan & Akyüz, 2015: 158). Based on these insights, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₅: Leader support perceived by marketing managers has a positive and significant effect on internal brand value.

H₆: Perceived leader support of marketing managers has a positive and significant effect on individual creativity.

H₇: There is a mediating effect of individual creativity on the effect of leader support perceived by marketing managers on internal brand value.

1.6. Organizational Silence(Acquiescent)

The success of a business in the competitive market depends heavily on employee productivity (Bordbar et al., 2019: 199). Various factors may negatively affect employee productivity within organizations, leading to unintended behaviors (Sufi et al., 2023: 1). These behaviors can include the lack of information sharing, poor cooperation, and failure to provide feedback on service failures (Sholekar & Shofhi, 2017: 115). As a result, employees may neglect their responsibilities, ignore disruptions, or speak negatively about company procedures. This can escalate into broader issues such as absenteeism, psychological problems, diminished trust, loss of power, and an increased intention to leave the company (Imam & Kim, 2023: 10519). Furthermore, employees may withhold crucial business information, keep competitive secrets, or even engage in unethical actions such as failing to inform consumers adequately, spreading negative advertising, or other malicious behaviors (Van Dyne et al., 2003: 1365).

Though most employees are aware of issues arising within the organization, they often avoid voicing these concerns (Morrison & Milliken, 2000: 706). Consequently, various internal factors can lead employees to exhibit silence behaviors, such as fear of making mistakes, shyness in communication, fear of failure, or fear of punishment (Khalid & Ahmed, 2016: 176-177). Organizational practices, management approaches, structural rules, and demographic differences

also play a role in encouraging silence (Park & Keil, 2009: 902). Organizational silence manifests in different forms among employees, and the literature typically categorizes it into three subtypes: acquiescent, defensive, and protective silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Acquiescent silence refers to situations where employees believe their input won't lead to any meaningful change. As a result, they choose to withhold their opinions and comply with the status quo. Employees exhibiting this form of silence often lack motivation to act and do not raise concerns about uncomfortable issues (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013: 351; Pinder & Harlos, 2001: 349). Acquiescent silence is commonly observed in environments where dissent is unwelcome, where there is no hope for change, or where employee input is seen as ineffective (Khalid & Ahmed, 2016: 177). In such cases, employees may accept the current situation and focus on completing their individual tasks, without taking initiative to improve processes or challenge existing norms. The social relationships employees establish within their work groups significantly influence their behavior towards their work, either positively or negatively (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006: 1545). The attitude of leaders within the organization plays a crucial role in shaping these social relationships, contributing not only to employees' success in their tasks but also to their personal development (She et al., 2023: 2). The importance of leader-member interactions becomes evident as employees need to quickly adapt to ever-changing market dynamics (Wiatr, 2022: 537). The leadership behaviors of first-degree managers are key to fostering an ethical climate in which employees feel encouraged to express their ideas and opinions freely and actively contribute to problem-solving (Brinsfield, 2012: 2).

In technology-driven fields, employees are expected to contribute to the organization's value by generating innovative ideas. The interaction of perceived support, individual capabilities, and internal norms can shape employees' perceptions of the company's brand value (Wolverton et al., 2022: 2501). If organizational silence is overlooked by managers, it may have significant negative consequences on productivity and employee engagement. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the perceived support within organizations and understand the consequences of silence behaviors (Wang & Hsieh, 2013: 784). The procedures implemented by an organization to help employees perform their tasks more efficiently can enhance their positive perception of the company's brand value by allowing them to fully utilize their individual talents. However, factors that contribute to organizational silence may hinder this positive perception. In environments where silence behavior is prevalent, the effect of perceived support on individual creativity and internal brand perception may be diminished. Conversely, in environments with lower levels of silence behavior, the impact of perceived support on creativity and internal brand perception can be more pronounced (Vakola & Boudaras, 2005: 442). In light of these observations, the following hypotheses were developed to assess the moderating effect of organizational silence (acquiescent silence) on the relationship between perceived support (both organizational and leader support) and employees' individual creativity and internal brand value perceptions:

H₈ : Organizational silence (acquiescent) has a moderating effect on the effect of individual creativity of marketing managers on internal brand value.

H₉ : There is a moderating effect of organizational silence (acquiescent) on the effect of marketing managers' perceived organizational support on their individual creativity.

H₁₀ : There is a moderating effect of organizational silence (acquiescent) on the effect of organizational support perceived by marketing managers on internal brand value.

H₁₁ : There is a moderating effect of organizational silence (acquiescent) on the effect of leader support perceived by marketing managers on their individual creativity.

H₁₂ : There is a moderating effect of organizational silence (acquiescent) on the effect of marketing managers' perceived leader support on their internal brand value.

2. Methodology of the Study

2.1. Research Model

The research model developed to explore the relationships between the dependent, independent, and mediating variables, as outlined within the theoretical framework of the study, is

illustrated in Figure 1. This model aims to assess how organizational support, leader support, and organizational silence influence marketing managers' perceptions of internal brand value and their individual creativity. By examining these relationships, the study seeks to understand the broader impact of perceived support on employees' attitudes and behaviors in a competitive industry.

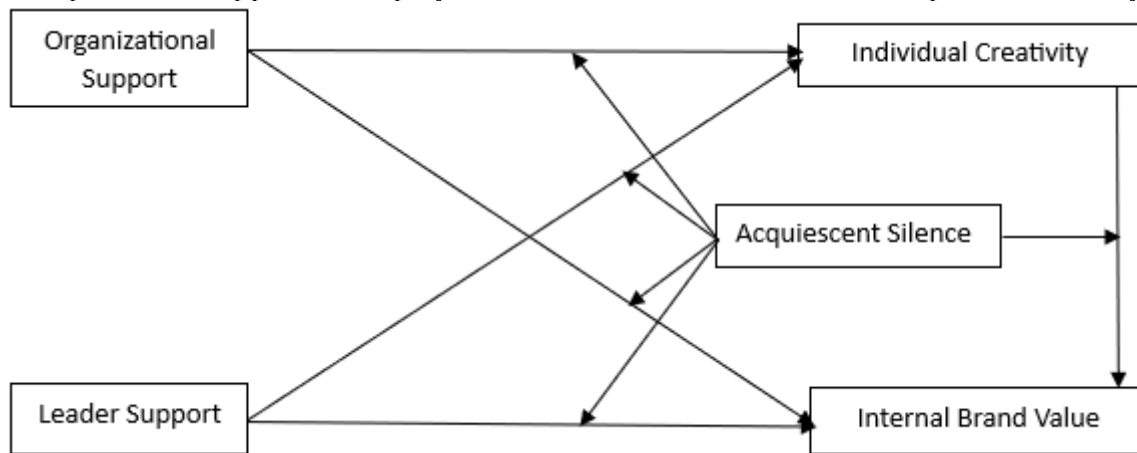


Figure 1. Research Model

2.2. Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises employees in managerial positions within the marketing departments of a telecommunications service provider operating in Turkey. While various approaches exist for determining appropriate sample sizes in research, it has been suggested that, under certain conditions, a sample size of approximately 200 participants may be deemed sufficient (Iacobucci, 2010: 92; Uyumaz & Sirgancı, 2020: 5335). In addition, Özen and Gül (2007: 415) indicate that a sample comprising 10% of the population may be adequate for descriptive research, 20% for small populations, and up to 30% for relational analyses. In this study, all employees working in the marketing department of the relevant institution were invited to participate in the survey, resulting in 197 valid responses. The data collection process was carried out between July 1, 2024, and August 15, 2024. The structural model analysis was conducted using the AMOS statistical software package.

This research was conducted with the approval of the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, as per their decision dated 12.06.2024 and numbered 2024/246.

2.3. Data Collection and Measurement Method

For data collection, a survey method was employed. The survey was prepared in a digital format and sent to participants through an online platform. Participants were asked to complete the survey, which consisted of 32 items in total. Of these, 4 items gathered demographic information, and 28 items were designed to measure the research variables. A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess the responses, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

The scales used for the measurement of the key variables were as follows: Organizational Support Scale (5 items): Based on Baker (2023); Leader Support Scale (7 items): Based on Baker (2023), Dalton et al. (2023), Boakye et al. (2023); Individual Creativity Scale (5 items): Based on Yıldız et al. (2022); Internal Brand Value Scale (6 items): Based on Raj (2022). Organizational Silence (Acquiescent) Scale (5 items): Based on Van Dyne et al. (2003), Candan (2019). These questionnaire items were reviewed in collaboration with an experienced industry professional to ensure the selection of the most appropriate items for accurately measuring the perceptions of the study's sample group.

2.4. Analysis and Findings

2.4.1. Descriptive Statistics

To understand the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study, the survey collected data on the following variables: gender, age, length of time working in the organization,

and education level. The frequency distribution of these demographic details is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Information of the Participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Duration of Employment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-30	6	3	Less than 1 year	12	6
31-40	106	54	1-5 years	30	15
41-50	80	41	6-10 years	33	17
51 and above	5	3	11-15 years	95	48
Total	197	100	16-20 years	22	11
Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)	21-25 years	5	3
License	97	49	Total	197	100
Master	97	49	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
phD	3	2	Man	103	52
Total	197	100	Woman	94	48
			Total	197	100

When examining Table 2, it can be observed that 54% of the participants fall within the age range of 31-40, and 41% are between the ages of 41-50, indicating that the majority of participants are middle-aged. Regarding educational background, it is evident that the participants have a high level of education, with 49% holding a bachelor's degree and 49% having completed a master's degree. In terms of tenure, 48% of participants have been working in the organization for 11-15 years, and 17% for 6-10 years, suggesting that the majority of participants have long-term experience within the organization. Additionally, the gender distribution is relatively balanced, with 52% of participants identifying as male and 48% as female, reflecting gender equality among marketing managers. This demographic information provides insight into the composition of the sample group and highlights the experienced, highly educated, and diverse nature of the participants.

2.4.2. Reliability Analysis Results

To measure the reliability of the scales used in this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was evaluated. Cronbach's alpha is an internal consistency coefficient that assesses the degree to which a set of variables correlates with each other. Its value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability. Generally, a value above 0.7 is considered to indicate high reliability (Gerber & Finn, 2005: 188; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011: 54). For the reliability analysis, the Cronbach alpha values for each scale used in this study are as follows

Table 3. Reliability Analysis

Scale	Standardized Cronbach's alpha	Item
Leader Support	0.929	7
Organizational Support	0.903	5
Acquiescent Silence	0.861	5
Individual Creativity	0.862	5
Internal Brand Value	0.920	6
General	0.910	28

When Table 3 is examined, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the scales were calculated as follows: Leader Support Scale: 0.929 Organizational Support Scale: 0.903 Acquiescent Silence Scale: 0.861 Individual Creativity Scale: 0.862 Internal Brand Value Scale: 0.920 Overall Reliability Coefficient: 0.910 Since these values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.7, it can be concluded that the reliability of the scales used in this study is at an adequate level.

2.4.3. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

The data set obtained within the scope of the research was analyzed by structural equation modeling, which is a powerful statistical method frequently used in scientific research methods. It

is a method that is applied to test the causal relationships between variables in the research model created based on the theoretical background of the study and includes confirmatory factor analysis and regression analysis (Hoe, 2008: 76). Exploratory factor analysis is based on the logic of reducing the number of factors by grouping variables with high correlation among the observed variables together under a single factor. Confirmatory factor analysis analyzes the structure of a previously determined factor based on a solid theoretical foundation (Kline, 2016). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results were combined in the analyses. The suitability of the data set for factor analysis needs to be tested. The results of the KMO (>0.5) test for sampling adequacy and the results of the Barlett's test, which shows that there is a correlation relationship between the groups, are included (Williams et al., 2010: 4). As a result of the factor analysis, the factor loadings of each question variable are examined and the analysis is repeated by removing the observed variable with a factor loading below 0.4 from the model (Shrestha, 2021: 8; Napitupulu et al., 2017: 701). Descriptive statistics, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results for the data set of the study are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Scale	Variable	EFA	CFA	Mean	SD	Mean
Leader Support (Baker, 2023: 291 ; Dalton et al., 2023: 10 ; Boakye, 2023: 215)	My manager makes my tasks easier for me.	.701	.816	4.13	0.82	4.2
	I trust my manager when things get difficult at work.	.808	.862	4.23	0.83	
	My manager helps to solve work-related problems.	.827	.878	4.28	0.79	
	Working with my manager is inspiring.	.760	.851	3.98	0.98	
	My manager is always there for me when I need him.	.849	.927	4.19	0.87	
	My manager is interested in solving personal problems.	.521	.671	4.01	1.02	
	My manager treats me with respect.	.614	.700	4.51	0.69	
Organizational Support (Baker, 2023: 292)	In the organization, the information I need to do my job is collected and evaluated.	.672	.738	3.65	0.92	3.6
	I can receive adequate support at the Institution when I have a specific work-related need.	.775	.891	3.65	0.88	
	The well-being of the organization's employees is at the forefront.	.705	.753	3.58	0.93	
	My individual achievements are appreciated in the organization.	.718	.869	3.62	0.96	
	I can provide adequate support in the organization when I encounter a problem.	.765	.831	3.74	0.86	
Acquiescent Silence (Van Dyne, et al., 2003: 1386; Candan, 2019: 271)	I am reluctant to talk about work-related suggestions because they are not relevant to me.	.627	.686	2.15	1.11	1.8
	I do not express my opinions in every situation as I am a person who agrees with the decisions to be taken.	.664	.457	1.99	1.00	
	I keep my opinions on solutions to problems to myself.	.751	.808	1.70	0.85	
	I hesitate to express my ideas for work because I don't believe it will make a difference in my favor.	.673	.742	1.65	0.79	
	I refrain from expressing my views on how things could be done better because I think it is none of my business.	.651	.724	1.70	0.80	
Individual Creativity (Yıldız, et al., 2022: 718)	I research new technologies and methods in my work.	.572	.676	4.13	0.73	4.1
	I try new ways to achieve goals.	.762	.863	4.28	0.65	
	I constantly develop creative ideas in my work.	.714	.769	4.03	0.74	
	I often approach problems from a new perspective.	.696	.759	3.99	0.72	
	I share and discuss creative ideas with my colleagues.	.611	.681	4.16	0.70	
	In the organization, I am aware of the brand value of the company through internal communication.	.804	.842	4.22	0.92	
	The Company's brand value is prioritized in customer relationship management.	.797	.852	4.15	0.98	

Internal Brand Value (Raj, 2022: 306-307)	Internal working processes make me feel good about the brand.	.791	.903	3.82	1.04	4.1
	The management of the organization transfers the brand value to all employees.	.796	.846	3.85	0.98	
	Employees are aware of the company's brand value.	.657	.715	3.83	0.98	
	I consider the brand value of the organization when interacting with customers.	.606	.710	4.48	0.70	
EFA Total Variance Explained (%)						71
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test						0.916
Barlett's Test of Sphericity						Approx. Chi Square= 4143.835; df= 378 p<0,000

When Table 4 is examined, the mean value of the leader support scale (4.2), organizational support scale (3.6), individual creativity scale (4.1) and internal brand value scale (4.1) were calculated. It can be stated that employees' opinions have a high average value for these variables. Acquiescent silence scale (1.8) mean value was calculated. From these mean values, it is understood that employees' acceptance of silence is low. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, KMO (0.916) and Barlett's test ($p < 0,000$) results indicate that the data set is suitable for factor analysis. The question variables formed a 5-factor structure. The explained variance ratio was calculated as 71 %. When the factor loadings of the question variables are examined, it is seen that each of them is loaded with a value above the specified threshold value. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to test the fit of the data set with the model. The acceptance limits and analysis outputs of the most frequently used and accepted goodness of fit indices in the literature are given in Table 5. The acceptable limit of the AGFI value is reported to be 0.9 and above in some studies. However, this value is sensitive to sample size and model complexity. For this reason, it can be stated that it will be appropriate up to 0.8 (Doll et al., 1994: 456).

Table 5. Goodness of Fit Indices

Indeks	Suggested acceptable index level	Index value obtained
CMIN/DF	< 3	1,647
AGFI	>0.80	0,802
NFI	>0.85	0,875
TLI	>0.80	0,939
CFI	>0.90	0,946
RMSEA	<0.08	0,057

Source: (Sandhu and Al Naqbi, 2023: 1704; Hoe, 2008: 77).

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the goodness of fit indices obtained as a result of confirmatory factor analysis are below the acceptable limits. Within the framework of these results, it can be stated that the data set is consistent with the model.

2.4.4. Hypothesis Tests

2.4.4.1. Total Impact and Mediating Impact Analysis

After the fit test of the data set collected within the scope of the research with the model was within acceptable limits, the results of the regression analysis, which will test the level of influence between the latent variables, were evaluated. The results of the analysis are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression Analysis Results

Factor relation	β	R ²	S.E	C.R.	P	Result
LS => IBV (total effect)	0,128	0,467	0,062	1,515	0,130	H ₅ : not supported
OS => IBV (total effect)	0,588		0,073	5,780	0,000	H ₂ : supported
LS => IC	0,004	0,346	0,068	0,039	0,969	H ₆ : not supported
OS => IC	0,585		0,079	5,169	0,000	H ₃ :supported
IC => IBV	0,253	0,509	0,083	3,205	0,001	H ₁ : supported
LS => IBV (direct effect)	0,126		0,060	1,540	0,123	-
OS => IBV (direct effect)	0,442		0,075	4,302	0,000	-

LS => IC => IBV	0,001	%95 CI (Lower -0,061; Upper: 0,079)	H ₇ : not supported
OS => IC => IBV	0,148	%95 CI (Lower 0,042; Upper: 0,29)	H ₄ : supported
LS: Leader support; OD: Organizational support; IC: Individual creativity; IBV: Internal brand value			

In the model created within the scope of the research, the percentage of the dependent variable explained by the independent variables is examined with the R² value. When the table is examined, it is seen that 50.9% of internal brand value can be explained by leader support, organizational support and individual creativity variables. When the hypothesis tests were examined, it was found that organizational support had a positive and significant effect on internal brand value ($\beta=0.588$; $p<0.000$), organizational support had a positive and significant effect on individual creativity ($\beta=0.585$; $p<0.000$), and individual creativity had a positive and significant effect on internal brand value ($\beta=0.253$; $p<0.001$). In addition, a positive and significant mediating effect of individual creativity on the effect of organizational support on internal brand value ($\beta = 0.148$; Lower: 0.042; Upper: 0.29 at 95% confidence interval) was found. Within the framework of these results, hypotheses H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄ are accepted. There was no significant effect of leader support on internal brand value ($p>0.05$) and no significant effect of leader support on individual creativity ($p>0.05$). In addition, there was no significant mediating effect of individual creativity (95% CI Lower: -0.061; Upper: 0.079) on the internal brand value of leader support. Based on these results, hypotheses H₅, H₆, H₇ are rejected.

2.4.4.2. Moderator Impact Analysis

Moderator effect analysis is applied to determine the role of the moderator variable affecting the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Field, 2012: 396). The moderating variable is a variable that changes the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. It is measured to what extent the effect of the independent variable affects the outcome variable together with the effect of the moderating variable (Frazier et al., 2004: 116). The existence of the moderating effect is determined by calculating the effect of the predictor variable on the dependent variable, the effect of the moderating variable on the dependent variable and the effect of the interaction term of the predictor variable and the moderator variable on the dependent variable. For the hypothesis to be supported, the significance of the effects of the predictor and moderator variables is not important. The significance of the effect of the interaction term indicates that there is a moderating effect (Baron & Kenny, 1986: 1174). In the research model, the moderating variable was determined as acquiescent silence. The moderating effect was examined in the effect of organizational support and leader support on internal brand value and individual creativity variables and also in the effect of individual creativity on internal brand value. The results of the analyzes are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Moderator Impact Analysis Results

Factor relation	β	S.E	C.R.	P	Result
IC X AS => IBV	0,147	0,03	2,339	0,019	H ₈ : Supported
OS X AS => IBV	0,054	0,032	-0,078	0,341	H ₁₀ : Not supported
LS X AS => IBV	0,062	0,032	0,976	0,329	H ₁₂ : Not supported
OS X AS => IC	0,122	0,024	2,033	0,042	H ₉ : Supported
LS X AS => IC	0,164	0,024	2,464	0,014	H ₁₁ :Supported

OS: Organizational support; LS: Leader support; IBV: Internal brand value; IC: Individual creativity; AS: Acquiescent silence

The calculations regarding the regulatory role of organizational silence in the research model were made in the Amos program and with the maximum likelihood calculation method. In order to avoid multicollinearity problems among the variables in the calculations, prediction and regulatory variables were standardized and included in the calculations. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) method, only the effect of the interaction variable on the outcome variable is included in Table 7 since the significance of the interaction term on the outcome variable is sufficient for the existence of the moderating effect. According to the results of the analysis, significant effects of acquiescent silence on the effect of individual creativity on internal brand value ($\beta=0,147$; $p<0,019$), acquiescent

silence on the effect of organizational support on individual creativity ($\beta=0,122$; $p<0,042$), and acquiescent silence on the effect of leader support on individual creativity ($\beta=0,164$; $p<0,014$) could be determined. Within the framework of these results, H_8 , H_9 , H_{11} are accepted. In the effect of organizational support and leader support on internal brand value, there was no significant effect of acquiescent silence ($p>0.05$). Within the framework of these results, H_{10} and H_{12} are rejected.

2.4.4.3. Slope plots of regulatory impact analysis

Within the scope of the moderating effect analyses of the research, the slope graphs showing how the moderating effect of the sub-dimensions of organizational silence in the effect between variables is low and high and how the prediction variable affects the dependent variable are given in Figure 2.

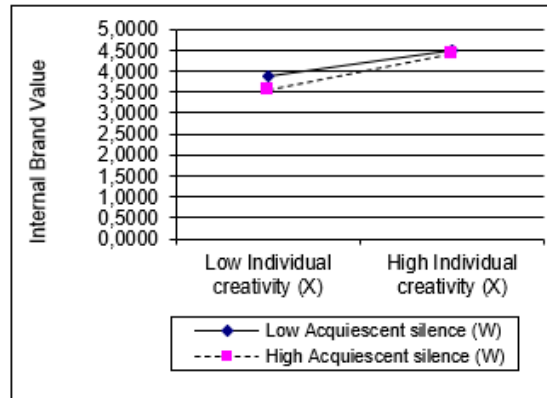


Figure 2. Slope Plots of The Moderating Effect of Acquiescent Silence On The Effect of Individual Creativity On Internal Brand Value

Figure 2 shows the slope graph of the moderating effect of acquiescent silence on the effect of individual creativity on internal brand value. The effect of individual creativity on internal brand value is significant when acquiescent silence is low and high. Internal brand value increases as the individual creativity of employees with high acquiescent silence behavior increases. In case of high acquiescent silence, the effect of individual creativity on internal brand value is stronger.

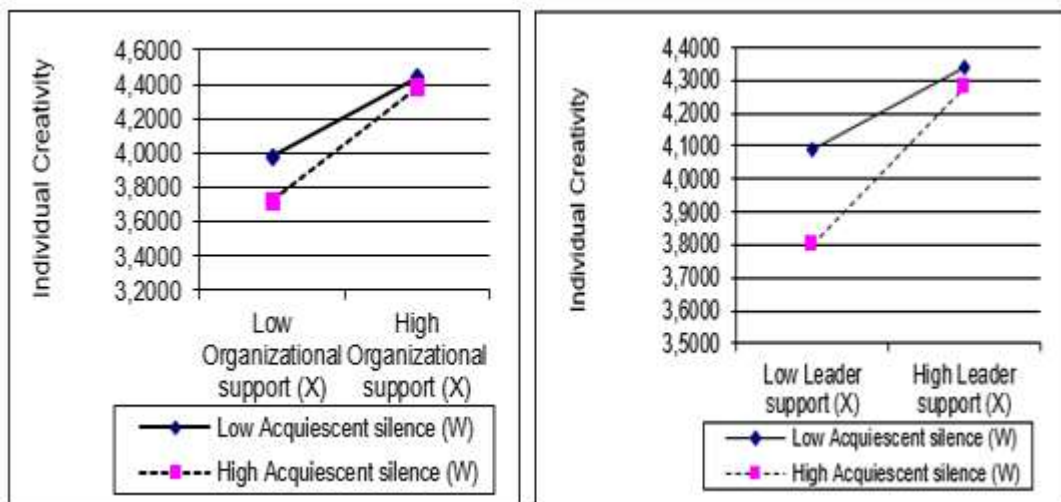


Figure 3. Slope Plots of The Moderating Effect of Acquiescent Silence On The Effect of Organizational Support And Leader Support On Individual Creativity

Figure 3 shows the slope graphs of the moderating effect of acquiescent silence on the effect of organizational support and leader support on individual creativity. The effect of organizational support and leader support on individual creativity is significant in cases where acquiescent silence is low and high. As the support perceived by employees with high acquiescent silence behavior

increases, their individual creativity increases. The effect of perceived support on individual creativity is stronger in the case of high acquiescent silence.

Conclusion

The services offered to users in the telecommunications sector are services that include technical details, depend on wired and wireless infrastructure services, and require intensive customer relationship management. Managing complex business processes in a timely manner and providing quality service at a level that can create satisfaction is necessary to ensure competitive advantage in the sector. For this reason, employees working in managerial positions in the field of marketing can evaluate managerial processes for the company by analyzing customer needs, competitor behaviors, and competitive regulations, and can take an active role in shaping the management processes of the organization and the competitive strategies of the senior management by generating ideas. For this reason, in this study, the effects of organizational support and leader support perceived by the employees working as managers in marketing departments on their individual creativity and internal brand perceptions were examined. In addition, the regulatory role of organizational silence in this effect was investigated.

As a result of the findings obtained in the research, a significant effect of organizational support on internal brand value and individual creativity could be determined. Studies in the literature (Aldabbas et al., 2021; Esguerra et al., 2022; Hadi et al., 2024; Li et al., 2023; Rubivanta & Sunaryo, 2023; Utami et al., 2023; Sethi et al., 2023) obtained similar results. The perception of organizational support shows the value of the organization for employees to feel good at work. It is an indicator of how the organization as a living space responds to employee needs (Aldabbas et al., 2021: 6502). In order to provide telecommunication services in line with customer demands, detailed operational procedures are implemented. Employees' perception of the processes that make up the whole organizational climate at the level where they can achieve their own work at the most satisfactory level contributes to the success of the person, his/her individual effort, and working in an understanding that can add value to his/her work and show extra role behaviors. This approach enables marketing employees to develop a sense of trust in their companies and to have positive thoughts about the brand. The fact that the mediating effect of individual creativity on the effect of organizational support on internal brand value is significant in the research results indicates this result. In this way, it can be stated that by integrating the employees with the organizational processes, they will embrace the brand value of the company and see the brand as a part of themselves by displaying more creative and more challenging behaviors for customer acquisition, especially in a competitive environment.

Within the scope of social exchange theory, employees are in constant interaction with their environment, other employees from different departments, and managers (Zhang et al., 2018: 1967). Employees need the support of their managers to engage in proactive behavior in an overwhelming competitive environment. Researchers such as Choi et al. (2021), Gulatiet et al. (2023), and Dahle & Urstad (2022) have suggested that employees who have good interactions with their managers can take a more active role in their work, particularly in terms of innovative behavior.

Within the scope of this study, no significant effect of leader support on employees' individual creativity and internal brand value was found. These results are similar to the findings obtained by Hadi et al. (2024) and Özbağ (2014) in their studies with similar variables. It can be said that marketing managers do not have sufficient interaction with their managers during the execution of their work. This situation indicates that there is a disconnect between top managers and the business management process. It is understood that employees cannot adopt the active role of their managers in their individual efforts and perceptions of internal brand value.

Based on the results obtained, it is concluded that the lack of a significant effect of leader support on employees' individual creativity and the internal brand value of the company may negatively impact the company's success in an active competitive environment. In this context, the findings of this research suggest that managers in companies serving in the sector should foster a collective

working environment to achieve the company's strategic goals by emphasizing their interaction and communication with decision-makers in lower positions.

The majority of services offered in the telecommunications sector require complex business processes due to their technical characteristics. In the complex workplaces of service organizations, work may sometimes not progress as expected, resulting in obstacles and communication breakdowns. When the efforts of employees, who are aware of this situation, are insufficient to improve things as required, it may lead to silence behavior towards the process (Kim & Song, 2023). However, the concept of silence should not always be viewed negatively within organizations. Loyal employees, for example, may choose silence in negative situations or conditions as a result of their commitment to the organization (Bryant & Cox, 2004: 588). Silence behavior can bring people together or alienate them, positively or negatively affect human relations, increase or decrease loyalty towards the workplace, and contribute to the preservation of internal values (Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

Within the scope of this research, the effect of the interaction of the variable of acquiescent silence, considered organizational silence, with the variables of organizational support, leader support, and individual creativity on internal brand value was examined. Acquiescent silence has a positive and strong effect on the interaction between these variables. This result indicates that during service provision in the sector, employees' silence in response to situations such as the difficulty of solving complex tasks simultaneously – from receiving customer demand to service activation – and the inability of managers to address all issues at once, may lead to a more efficient business organization in the long term. In large and complex organizational environments, it can be stated that the effort to achieve results by exploring various ways to complete tasks, instead of expecting solutions to each individual problem, will contribute more to employees' individual success. It is understood that implementing this approach, at a level that strengthens corporate loyalty without negatively affecting the company's internal brand value, can provide a significant competitive advantage in the sector.

Research Limitations and Recommendations

Due to the wide variety of services in the telecommunications sector, many service providers operate within the industry. Additionally, because of the high technical nature of the services, they are provided across various departments such as marketing, technical operations, and support units. The broad structure of the sector leads to diversity in the number of employees and specialized departments. The fact that this study was conducted on employees in managerial positions in the marketing departments of a company in the telecommunications sector can be considered a limitation of this research. Moreover, definitions and applications of different variables for employees vary in the literature. Therefore, future research could focus on employees working in different companies with other variables.

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