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How Does Tourist Guides' Sense of Trust in Travel Agencies Affect Their Sustainable Performance? Mediating Role of Professional Vitality

Seyahat Acentelerine Duyulan Güven Turist Rehberlerinin Sürdürülebilir Performanslarını Nasıl Etkiler? Mesleki Canlılığın Aracılık Rolü

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Abstract

The current study aimed to detect the effect of tourist guides' trust in travel agencies on their sustainable performance and test the mediating role of professional vitality in this relationship. In this context, field study was conducted on tourist guides throughout Turkey and 381 questionnaires were collected. The hypotheses were tested with structural equation modeling. The analysis showed that tourist guides' trust in travel agencies increased their sustainable performance and professional vitality. In addition, the professional vitality of tourist guides positively affected their sustainable performance. Finally, it has been determined that professional vitality was a prominent mediator in the relationship between tourist guides' trust in travel agencies and sustainable performance.

Keywords: Organizational Trust, Sustainable Employee Performance, Professional Vitality, Tourist Guide

Öz

Araştırmada turist rehberlerinin seyahat acentelerine duydukları güvenin sürdürülebilir performanslarına etkisinin belirlenmesi ve bu ilişkide mesleki canlılığın aracı rolünün test edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu kapsamda turist rehberleri üzerine Türkiye genelinde alan araştırması yapılmış ve 381 anket toplanmıştır. Yapısal eşitlik modeli kullanılarak hipotezler test edilmiştir. Analizler neticesinde turist rehberlerinin seyahat acentelerine duyduğu güvenin sürdürülebilir performanslarını ve mesleki canlılıklarını arttırdığı tespit edilmiştir. Bunun yanında turist rehberlerinin mesleki canlılığının sürdürülebilir performanslarını pozitif yönde etkilediği görülmüştür. Son olarak turist rehberlerinin seyahat acentelerine duydukları güven ile turist rehberlerinin sürdürülebilir performansları arasındaki ilişkide mesleki canlılığın önemli bir aracı olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgütsel Güven, Sürdürülebilir Çalışan Performansı, Mesleki Canlılık, Turist Rehberi

1. Introduction

As frontline workers in the tourism industry, tourist guides influentially shape tourist experiences in the visited destinations. Tourist guidance service is one of the primary services offered by travel agencies. In this context, the service quality provided by tourist guides to tourists is critically significant not only for the success of the travel agency or tourist guide but also for the entire image of the destination and the country (Huang et al., 2010; Kırıcı Tekeli, 2020). Tourist guides, who act as an ambassador against foreign tourists in the promotion of their countries, are at a vital point for the tourism industry, and thus they play a significant role in strengthening the image of the country and region and in the branding process (Erkol Bayram, 2019; Kırıcı and Özkoç, 2017). At this point, tourist guides' performances and sustainability appeared as significant factors that should be emphasized.

Tourist guides' sustainable performance (TGSP) is vital for the tourism guiding profession and the functioning and development of the tourism industry in the long term (Erkol Bayram, 2019). Employee over-performance can lead to adverse consequences for employee health and well-being in the short- and long term. This situation may negatively affect employee performance in the future (Ji et al., 2021; Wright and Cropanzano, 2004). Therefore, while considering TGSP, tourist guides' performance and their health and well-being should be taken together (De Vos et al., 2020; Ji et al., 2021). The literature review showed that while individuals' business performances were generally discussed (Ning and Jin, 2009; Silva, 2022; Verburg et al., 2018), employees' sustainable performance was ignored.

The relationship between the travel agency and the tour guide is a significant issue in forming TGSP. Here, the studies on travel agencies and tourist guides generally focused on the results of tourist guides' performance (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Çokal and Yılmaz, 2020; Dönbak, 2021; Huang et al., 2010), or focused on personal factors that might affect the tourist guides' performance (Erkol Bayram, 2019; Koroğlu and Avcıkurt, 2014). However, the sense of trust between the travel agency and the tour guide is a significant factor in forming TGSP. So much so that Verburg et al. (2018) states that trust in the organization is a prominent element in terms of employee performance. Moreover, professional vitality (PV) is another concept that is closely related to TGSP. Studies on this subject indicate that employee vitality is a substantial factor in forming a more engaged, sustainable, productive, and healthier workforce. Put another way, employees' vitality is crucial in constituting sustainable performance (De Jonge and Peeters, 2019; Lavrusheva, 2020; Sun et al., 2022). In addition, organizational factors such as trust in the organization play an integral role in PV development (Chu et al., 2015). Therefore, the need for a holistic evaluation of tourist guides' trust in travel agencies, TGSP, and PV comes to the fore.

This research has focused on tourist guides, who are prominent service providers undertaking essential missions in travel agencies, destinations, and the country. In this context, this research aimed to determine to what extent tourist guides' trust in travel agencies affects TGSP and to test the mediating role of PV in this relationship. The literature review showed that organizational trust (OT) and sustainable performance studies were frequent in the studies on organization sustainability (Ha and Lee, 2022; Yan et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2018), but OT and PV studies (Dinç et al., 2019) were scant. In addition, although some researchers discussed PV and employees' sustainable performance (De Jonge and Peeters, 2019; Sun et al., 2022) in the literature, the number of studies in the tourism literature was scant (Sun et al., 2022).

In addition to contributing to limited studies on TGSP (Sun et al., 2022), this study, unlike other studies, evaluated sustainable performance in the context of the trust relationship between travel agencies and tourist guides and considered PV as a critical factor for TGSP. Besides, it is thought that it is a crucial contribution to the literature that the concepts of OT, TGSP, and PV are handled holistically and the relationships between the concepts are revealed in the study. In particular, the study, which emphasized the importance of long-term sustainability rather than high performance in the short term, offered some results in practical terms. In this context, field study was carried out by systematically creating a theoretical framework and research model. The analysis results were discussed in terms of future theoretical and practical developments.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

2.1. Organizational Trust and Sustainable Performance

In general, trust is a *“concept based on honesty and truth”* (Koç and Yazıcıoğlu, 2011: 47). OT refers to trust in the personality or identity of the organization. In addition, OT may arise from centralized structure, organizational culture, and the nature of the owner in small organizations (Demircan and Ceylan, 2003). OT is significant for efficient and long-term organization-employee relationships (George et al., 2020). In general, trust in organizations has prominent effects on employees' jobs, attitudes, and behaviors (Nyhan and Marlowe, 1997). In compliance with the conservation of resources (COR) theory, trust in organizations can positively result in individuals (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Paşamehmetoğlu et al., 2022). In other words, trust in the organization supports resource acquisition within the COR theory (Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2018). In the case of forming OT, positive results such as performance, productivity, job satisfaction, and morale increase are most likely to occur (Demircan and Ceylan, 2003).

Sustainability and performance have become attractive concepts to maintain the long-term performance of organizations and employees. Sustainable employee performance generally refers to the ideal working status of an employee, both now and in the future. Under the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainability, sustainable employee performance is *“an ideal working situation where performance can meet current work needs without compromising future performance to meet future work needs”* (Ji et al., 2021: 2). In addition, a study describes sustainable employee performance as *“maximizing worker health and well-being as well as job performance”* (Peeters et al., 2014: 5). Creating sustainable employee performance is emphasized as a powerful way to ensure the sustainability of both employees and the organizations (Ji et al., 2021). A sustainable employee performance process can ensure that the desired business goals are achieved permanently and efficiently while sustaining a satisfying level of employee well-being. However, while employees reach their goals, the resources utilized must be continuous and protected (Ji et al., 2021).

Studies in the literature indicate that there may be prominent relationships between OT and the sustainable performance of employees. OT is accepted as a significant factor for efficient and long-term employee-employer relations and can positively change employees' attitudes and behaviors (George et al., 2020; Silva, 2022). Yan et al. (2022) reported that if OT exists, employees can benefit the business for a long time and that trust is essential for effective performance. It is announced that trust is an inevitable condition of an organizational environment, that the perception of trust can be influential on employees and should be considered for performance (Cook

and Wall, 1980), and that leads employees to show more effort and performance (Ning et al., 2007). Research on this subject supports the relationship between OT and performance (Ning and Jin, 2009; Silva, 2022; Verburg et al., 2018). Although the studies conducted in this context provide strong evidence for the relationships between OT and employee performance, there are uncertainties about the relationships between OT and sustainable employee performance. Based on this, H₁ was developed.

H₁: Trust in travel agencies positively affects TGSP.

2.2. The Mediating Role of Professional Vitality

PV is a positive emotional state which manifests itself with high energy, effort, perseverance, and endurance in working life (Sun et al., 2022). PV means "*being energetic and strong and feeling good physically and mentally*" (De Jonge and Peeters, 2019: 2). Although there are uncertainties about the factors that are effective in PV formation, some researchers have focused on this issue. In this context, factors such as interactions with others, some job characteristics, feedback from managers, job identity, tendential and contextual variables, and motivational process variables that initiate and maintain work-related behavior are influential on employees' PV (Little et al., 2011; Shrager and Shirom, 2009).

Vitality, which can also be expressed as the opposite of burnout, can be discussed within the COR theory. In this context, the trust factor is a significant variable in conserving the resources of employees (Halbesleben et al., 2014), and the risk of loss of resources may cause burnout in the employees, decreasing their vitality (Sun et al., 2022). In addition, positive emotions and moods may arise as a result of employees having a high level of trust perception. OT is a factor worth considering to increase the effectiveness of PV models (Chu et al., 2015). In this context, H₂ was developed based on the idea that employees' trust in organizations is a source of vitality.

H₂: Trust in travel agencies positively affects the PV of tourist guides.

Within the COR theory, employees generally evaluate their physical, emotional, and cognitive resources. When resources are lost or at risk, they engage in a negative cognitive evaluation. Conversely, employees have a positive cognitive evaluation. This situation eventually determines the vitality of employees (Sun et al., 2022). PV is a source of energy that increases performance and enables employees to do their jobs successfully (Demir, 2021; Hennekam, 2016). As an antecedent of positive organizational outcomes, PV is an influential variable (Chu et al., 2015). The results of a limited number of studies on PV and employee performance show that PV is a dynamic factor in causing employee performance (Hennekam, 2016; Sun et al., 2022). Besides, De Jonge and Peeters (2019) emphasize that PV has a critical role in the long-term sustainable performance of employees. In light of this information, H₃ was developed:

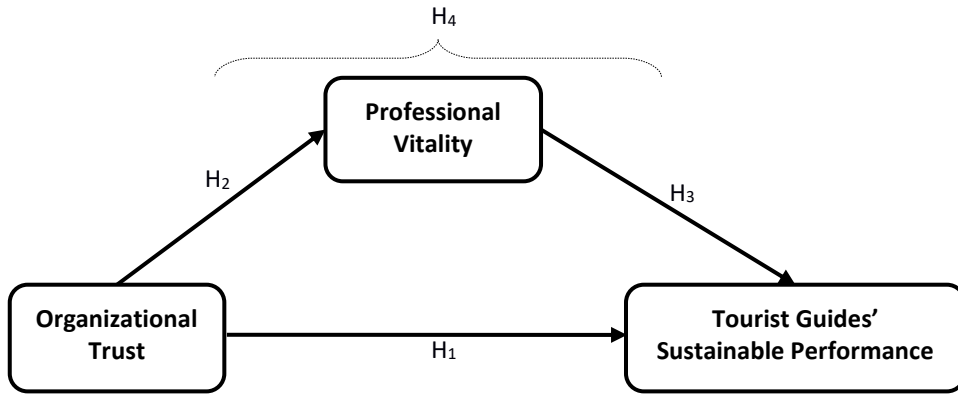
H₃: PV positively affects the TGSP.

The current study examines the mediating role of PV on the effect of tourist guides' trust in travel agencies on TGSP. The study, handled within the COR theory, claims that employees' trust in their organizations in matters related to their resources can make them more potent in their profession, which can be beneficial for the

formation of sustainable performance through PV. Indeed, the results of the literature review presented in the study also point to this. In this direction, H₄ was developed:

H₄: PV has a mediating role in the effect of trust in travel agencies on TGSP.

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model



Four basic hypotheses were determined in the research aiming to reveal the effect of tourist guides' trust in travel agencies on TGSP and the mediating role of PV in this relationship. The research model, which allows the hypotheses to be tested, is given in Figure 1.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measures

A field study was conducted to analyze the hypotheses formed within the research. Data on research variables were collected using the questionnaire technique. The 12-item OT scale developed by Nyhan and Marlowe (1997) was used to measure tourist guides' trust in travel agencies. TGSP was measured with the 10-item sustainable performance scale developed by Ji et al. (2021). In the study, tourist guides' PV, which is a mediator variable, was measured with the 5-item PV scale developed by Kark and Carmeli (2009). All scales used in the study are in the 5-point Likert type, rated from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

3.2. Sample and Procedure

The research population comprised 12.129 tourist guides—9.291 active and 2.838 inactive—affiliated to 13 Tourist Guide Chambers in Türkiye (Turist Rehberleri Birliği, 2022). The ethics committee permission required for the questionnaires conducted on the tourist guides came from the Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University Scientific Research Publication Ethics Committee. Data was collected using the convenience sampling method through face-to-face and online questionnaires between 25 November 2022 and 20 January 2023. The calculations on sample adequacy showed that a minimum sample of 372 people would suffice for a population of 12.129 people (The Survey System, 2022). In this context, 381 questionnaires collected only from active tourist guides were used within the scope of the analysis.

The tourist guides' demographic characteristics showed that 123 of the tourist guides were female and 258 were male, 204 of them were married, and 177 of them were single. Most of the tourist guides (36.7%) were between 31 and 40, and a large part (64.8%) had a bachelor's degree. With regard to professional experience, most of the tourist guides (27.8%) had 6-10 years of experience, and most (71.7%) were self-employed. In terms of the professional chambers, the most data was collected from the guides registered with the Istanbul Chamber of Guides (39.6%) and the least from those registered with the Trabzon Regional Tourist Guides Chamber (2.4%).

3.3. Data Analysis Strategy

In line with the research purpose, analyses to reveal direct and indirect effects were performed. In this regard, hypotheses were tested on two structural equation models (SEM) by adopting the contemporary approach of Andrew F. Hayes. The significance of the mediating effect was tested in accordance with the bootstrap analysis result. According to the bootstrap analysis result, the mediator effect is significant if the lower-upper confidence interval values do not contain zero (Gürbüz, 2019; Hayes, 2018). Besides, "the goodness of fit (GoF)" of the SEM was checked with the values of " χ^2 = Chi-square, df = Degrees of freedom, IFI= Incremental Fit Index, TLI= Tucker-Lewis Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR= Standardized Root Mean Square Residual." In this context, " χ^2/df value below 5, TLI, IFI, CFI values above 0.90, and RMSEA and SRMR values below 0.80" indicated acceptable fit (İlhan and Çetin, 2014; Gürbüz, 2019; Meydan and Şeşen, 2015).

Two different programs, SPSS and AMOS, were used in the research. For the research data, firstly, the assumption of normality was checked through the Skewness-Kurtosis values. Skewness values were between -736/-198, and kurtosis values were between -827/1.398. The normality assumption was met since all values were between +2 and -2 (George and Mallery, 2016). Indeed, the normality assumption can be ignored in cases where the sample size is over 200 (Hair et al., 2014). The research validity was examined with "Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)", "Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)", and convergent and discriminant validity. Cronbach's alpha values for the reliability of the scales were checked. Correlation analysis was carried out to detect the relationships between OT, TGSP and PV. In order to analyze the research model and test the hypotheses, direct and indirect effects were analyzed through two SEMs.

4. Results

EFA was performed to detect the structural validity of the scales used in the study (Table 1). The EFA results indicated that the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy value for the OT scale was .94, the KMO value for the TGSP scale was .94, and the KMO value for the PV scale was .87. These results showed that the sample size was adequate for factor analysis. In addition to this, the Bartlett test of sphericity ($p < .001$) demonstrated that the correlation between items was proper for factor analysis. The scales' factor loadings and variance rates were high (Table 1).

Table 1: EFA and CFA Results

Factors	Items	EFA		CFA	AVE	CR	MSV	Cronbach's Alpha
		Factor Loadings	Variance (%)	Factor Loadings ^a				
OT	OT1	.65	62.152	.60	.58	.94	.17	.94
	OT2	.74		.71				
	OT3	.78		.77				
	OT4	.85		.84				
	OT5	.84		.83				
	OT6	.80		.79				
	OT7	.81		.78				
	OT8	.84		.82				
	OT9	.81		.77				
	OT10	.80		.76				
	OT11	.80		.76				
	OT12	.73		.71				
TGSP	TGSP1	.74	63.055	.69	.58	.93	.26	.93
	TGSP2	.74		.68				
	TGSP3	.78		.74				
	TGSP4	.86		.85				
	TGSP5	.82		.80				
	TGSP6	.79		.77				
	TGSP7	.84		.82				
	TGSP8	.84		.82				
	TGSP9	.79		.75				
	TGSP10	.72		.70				
PV	PV1	.83	67.064	.76	.59	.88	.26	.88
	PV2	.86		.69				
	PV3	.83		.78				
	PV4	.77		.83				
	PV5	.81		.79				
<p>GoF statistics for measurement model: $\chi^2=625.001$, $df=314$, $\chi^2/df=1.990$, $IFI=.956$, $TLI=.951$, $CFI=.956$, $RMSEA=.051$, $SRMR=.039$ Note: ^a All factors loadings are significant at $p<.001$</p>								

Table 1 indicates the conclusions of the measurement model created. As a result of CFA using the maximum likelihood method, the GoF statistics of the measurement model showed that the model was compatible. In the factor loads obtained as a result of CFA, the lowest factor load appeared as .60. Indeed, the suggestion that factor loads should be greater than the .50 critical value (Hair et al., 2014) was thus complied with. Besides, convergent and discriminant validity for the scales was checked. In convergent validity, all "Composite Reliability (CR)" values for the scales should be higher than the "Average Variance Extracted (AVE)" values, and the AVE value should be higher than the critical value of .50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The research results showed that all CR values were higher than AVE values, providing convergent validity (Table 1). In discriminant validity, the square root of AVE values should be higher than the correlation between factors (Gürbüz, 2019). The results showed that the square root of each AVE value was higher than the correlation between the factors, providing discriminant validity (Table 2). In addition, Cronbach's Alpha values for the reliability levels of the scales were checked. Cronbach's Alpha

values of the OT, TGSP, and PV scales were .94, .93, and .88, respectively (Table 1). They were over the critical limit of .70 (Pallant, 2017).

Table 2: Correlation, Mean, and Standard Deviation Values for Variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	Mean	Standard Deviations
OT (1)	.763*			3.62	.67
TGSP (2)	.413	.764*		4.07	.60
PV (3)	.366	.512	.769*	4.03	.60
Significance of correlations: $p < .001$					
*The square root of the AVE					

Relationships between OT, TGSP and PV were tested by using correlation analysis in the research. As seen in Table 2, while there was a positive relationship at the level of .413 between OT and TGSP, there was a positive relationship at the level of .366 between OT and PV. Besides, a positive relationship existed between PV and TGSP at the .512 level. Furthermore, while tourist guides' OT levels were relatively high, TGSP and PV levels were high (Table 2).

SEM was performed to the model created in the study through the AMOS statistical analysis program. Table 3 shows the results obtained regarding SEM and hypotheses. The GoF statistics of the first model—created to examine the direct effect of OT on TGSP—showed that the proposed model was compatible (Table 3). According to the results obtained, OT positively affected TGSP at the level of .414 ($p < .001$). In addition, OT explained 17.1% of TGSP. In line with these results, H_1 was accepted.

Table 3: The Results for SEM

Hypothesis	Relations	Path coefficients	C.R.	Decision
Direct effects (Model-1)				
H_1	OT→TGSP	.414	6,975*	Supported
Indirect effects (Model-2)				
H_2	OT→PV	.364	6.266*	Supported
H_3	PV→TGSP	.416	7.003*	Supported
H_4	OT→PV→TGSP	.151	-	Supported
GoF statistics (Model-1): $\chi^2=453.084$, $df=200$, $\chi^2/df=2.265$, $IFI=.958$, $TLI=.951$, $CFI=.958$, $RMSEA=.058$, $SRMR=.035$.				
GoF statistics (Model-2): $\chi^2=606.897$, $df=313$, $\chi^2/df=1.939$, $IFI=.958$, $TLI=.953$, $CFI=.958$, $RMSEA=.050$, $SRMR=.039$.				

GoF statistics for the second model created to examine indirect effects showed that the model was compatible (Table 3). OT positively affected PV at the .364 level ($p < .001$) and explained 13.2% of PV. Based on these results, H_2 was accepted. PV positively affected TGSP at the .416 level ($p < .001$). Therefore, H_3 was accepted. In addition, OT and PV explained 32.2% of TGSP. Bootstrap analysis was performed to detect the mediating effect of PV; the total, direct and indirect impacts are in Table 4.

Table 4: Bootstrapping Test Results for Mediating Effect

Dependent Variable	Total Effects	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Bootstrapping-Lower Bounds	Bootstrapping-Upper Bounds
TGSP	.414	.263	.151	.090	.221

The significance of the mediating effect was evaluated in accordance with the bootstrapping test results. Bootstrap analysis was performed with a 95% confidence interval and 5000 resampling options. For a significant mediating impact, the confidence interval values (Bootstrapping-Lower Bounds-Bootstrapping-Upper Bounds) must be nonzero (Gürbüz, 2019; Hayes, 2018). The analysis indicated that the mediating effect of PV was significant since the confidence interval value was nonzero ($\beta=.151$; CI=95%; [Lower Bounds=.090 & Upper Bounds=.221]). Hence, it has been concluded that PV is a mediator in the relationship between OT and TGSP. Therefore, H₄ was accepted. In general, all the hypotheses developed in this research were accepted.

5. Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

The current study examined the effects on PV and TGSP. In the study designed within the scope of COR theory, the trust relationship between the travel agency and tourist guides, who have to work together, was examined from the perspective of the tourist guide. In this context, it is assumed that perceived OT has an impact on the PV and TGSP.

This research revealed that tourist guides could gain OT perception based on bilateral relations and expectations between the tourist guide and the travel agency and that OT directly significantly increased TGSP. These findings were similar to study findings showing that trust in the organization could have positive results, such as high sustainable employee performance (Ning and Jin, 2009; Silva, 2022; Verbarg et al., 2018). Besides, it was determined that tourist guides' trust in travel agencies created positive physical and psychological conditions and played a decisive role in the formation of tourist guides' PV. Indeed, the study by Chu et al. (2015) showed that this result about tourist guides was also valid for other employees. According to another finding, tourist guides' high PV levels increased TGSP. In this regard, results obtained that support the view that personal factors as well as organizational factors are effective in the formation of long-term sustainable performance (De Jonge and Peeters, 2019; Sun et al., 2022). Indeed, the current study revealed that the sense of trust that might arise from the mutual relations between the tourist guide and the travel agency could increase TGSP both directly and through PV.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The study revealed that tourist guides' sense of trust, which stemmed from the mutual relations between tourist guides and travel agencies, affected TGSP and PV. Some studies (Güzel et al., 2014; Pelit and Katırcıoğlu, 2018) determined possible problems which might occur between travel agencies and tourist guides. In this study, as an advanced stage of the results of the related studies, the level of trust of tourist guides to travel agencies has been determined. Besides, previous studies have focused on the results of the performance of tourist guides (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Çokal and Yılmaz, 2020; Dönbak, 2021; Huang et al., 2010), some studies have focused on personal factors that may effect the performance of tourist guides (Köroğlu and

Avcıkurt, 2014; Erkol Bayram, 2019). In this context, this research determined that the OT variable—an organizational resource—would affect tourist guides' performance and contribute to their long-term sustainable performance.

Within the COR theory, the current study revealed that tourist guides' perceived trust towards travel agencies was a significant psychological resource in their PV. Besides, it was revealed that tourist guides' PV affected TGSP in the long run in terms of their health and well-being as well as their professional commitment (Pelit and Ateş, 2022). In addition, some researchers argue that PV is a part of employee sustainability (Van Scheppingen et al., 2015). At this point, in this research, it has been determined that PV is separate from sustainable performance and affects sustainable performance, similar to the approach and results of Sun et al. (2022).

5.2. Practical Implications

The determinant of the relationship between tourist guides and travel agencies is the trust placed by the tourist guides in travel agencies. Therefore, these developments impact TGSP and PV. In this direction, some suggestions are essential to tourism businesses and administrations for developing tourist guides—prominent service providers of the tourism industry—and providing them with a better future.

As generally known, tourist guides may experience problems in travel agencies such as low and delayed salary payment, working without social protection insurance coverage, and putting pressure on tourist guides on some issues in tours (Güzel et al., 2014; Pelit and Katircioğlu, 2018). Such negative relationships between the travel agency and the tourist guide undermine the atmosphere of trust. Therefore, this situation may affect the tour guide psychologically and decrease their performance in the long-term besides their PV. It is essential to eliminate such problems between the tourist guide and the travel agency and create a better atmosphere of trust. In this regard, increasing the supervision of authorized institutions such as "Association of Tourist Guides" and "Association of Turkish Travel Agencies" and adopting policies that protect the rights and interests of tourist guides can create an environment of trust.

Mutual exchange of information between tourist guides and travel agencies, transparency of the parties, and giving importance to tourist guides' opinions and suggestions may develop trust and form PV. These developments support TGSP, thus can create long-term benefits for both the tour guide and the travel agency. In addition, the travel agencies' lack of organization on tours or failure to fulfill their promises may negatively affect tourist guides' trust and vitality. Therefore, travel agencies should sensitively approach these situations that may affect the TGSP.

Since the tourism industry constantly changes and shows seasonal characteristics, the public or tourism industry administrations should handle tourist guides' wishes and expectations, especially considering the off-season periods. In this context, administrations – with the cooperation of the tourism industry and the public – should organize training programs and develop supportive policies to enhance tourist guides' vitality and sustainable performance in the tourism industry.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research in Türkiye focused on tourist guides' trust in travel agencies and the effects of this trust on their PV and sustainable performance. The fact that the data collected through a survey represented an off-season cross-sectional time is a

significant limitation in this study. Indeed, collecting data from tourist guides during the tourism season—when tourist activity is high—may produce different results. In addition, it is proposed to investigate what organizational factors other than trust are in the PV and TGSP. Besides, more comprehensive interviews can reveal influential factors for tourist guides to feel trust in travel agencies. In other words, qualitative research can discover the relationships and effects between variables. Carrying out studies on other tourism businesses—such as food & beverage or accommodation—is essential. Sustainable employee performance, scarcely discussed in the literature, is a significant investigation subject in the labor-intensive tourism industry.

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