



The Mediating Role of Perceived Victimization in the Effect of Organizational Exclusion on Revenge Intention

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Abstract: The attitudes and behaviors of employees within the organization determine their place and prestige in the organization. An employee who deviates from the goals of the organization may be excluded from the organization and this may cause the employee to seek revenge to harm the organization. An employee who intends revenge may try any way to harm the organization, its administrators and employees. Because the employee perceives himself as a victim due to exclusion and intends to take revenge. This situation may cause serious damage to the organization and cause irreversible results. This study aims to determine the mediating role of perceived victimization in the effect of organizational exclusion on revenge intention. The sample of the study consists of bank employees in Kırıkkale and Kırşehir provinces (n=435). Quantitative research method was used in the study and the data was collected with the prepared printed form (questionnaire). According to the results of the analysis, it was found that organizational exclusion positively affects perceived victimization and revenge intention. In addition, it was determined that perceived victimization has a mediating effect on the effect of organizational exclusion on revenge intention.

Keywords: Exclusion, Organizational Exclusion, Intention, Revenge Intention, Perceived Victimization

1. Introduction

Effective and efficient organizations require employees to act in line with the organization's objectives. Employees who move away from the goals and objectives of the organization and prioritize their own interests over the interests of the organization are ignored or overlooked by both administrators and colleagues. The employee who is treated in this way may want to punish or harm the members of the organization by acting like a victim instead of looking for the reasons for these behaviors. Because the ostracized employee can only relieve himself/herself in this way.

Organizational exclusion is the perception that occurs as a result of the employee being ignored and overlooked by his/her colleagues (Leung et al., 2011). Organizational exclusion is a behavior that causes the elimination of the positive attitude towards the employee, ignoring the employee, damaging his/her need to belong to a group, causing psychological exhaustion, frustration and sadness (Gümüştekin & Durmaz, 2021). As a result of organizational exclusion, it can be said that employees are negatively affected behaviorally and emotionally, and accordingly, their job satisfaction decreases and they develop negative emotions, aggressive attitudes and behaviors towards the workplace (Artar et al., 2019). Organizational exclusion includes behaviors that cause employees to be under severe stress and experience serious psychological problems (Fiset et al., 2017).

Employees who are exposed to some aggressive behaviors by both administrators et al. in business life may experience physical and psychological problems (Yılmaz, 2014). One of these aggressive behaviors is the exclusion of the employee from the organization and this may create a perception of victimization in the employee. Employees who perceive victimization may seek revenge in order to relieve themselves. The main reason for revenge intention is that the individual tries to correct the inequality done to him/her (Stillwell et al., 2008) and the main purpose is to harm or intend to harm the other party (Karaca et al., 2017). The employee with revenge intentions realizes his/her intentions

by obstructing the goals and objectives of the organization, disobeying rules and norms, and trying to damage power and status (Tripp et al., 2007). The more victimization is perceived, the more severe the employee's revenge intentions will be. At that point, administrators should exhibit fair management within the organization, warn employees who deviate from the determined organizational goals and objectives, and eliminate practices that will cause victimization.

When the literature on organizational exclusion, revenge intention and perceived victimization is examined, it is seen that there are not enough studies that examine the interactions between these three concepts as a whole. The study fills a crucial gap in terms of contributing to this gap in the literature by determining the relationships between these three concepts. The study will be useful and guiding for organizational administrators and those who will conduct research on these concepts. The main purpose of the study is to determine the interactions between organizational exclusion, revenge intention and perceived victimization. So, the research question was chosen as "Does perceived victimization mediate the effect of organizational exclusion on revenge intention?" The research was conducted in Kırıkkale and Kırşehir samples and is important in terms of understanding the importance of organizational exclusion and perceived victimization that may be effective in increasing revenge intention. As there are employees who set certain goals every year and cannot act in this direction and because of this reason, employees may be excluded from the organization, the study was conducted on bank employees.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Organizational exclusion

Organizational exclusion is the situation when an employee is ignored, disregarded, left out of processes, excluded, overlooked and neglected by his/her colleagues (Ferris et al., 2008). In other words, organizational exclusion is when an employee is ignored, disregarded or neglected by other employees, excluded from activities and studies, ostracized and excluded from groups if he/she goes beyond the goals of the organization or violates these goals (Yılmaz & Akgün, 2019; Yıldız & Develi, 2018). Based on these statements, organizational exclusion can also be defined as removing the employee from work processes, ignoring their requests and expectations, and avoiding communication with them.

Organizational exclusion occurs when an employee does not accept, respond to, or include his/her colleagues in groups and activities (Robinson et al., 2013). Although organizational exclusion occurs in the process of social interaction within the organization, it occurs when one of the parties in mutual relations excludes the other from the interaction process. In other words, exclusion occurs as a result of the violation of the psychological contract between the employee and the organization, and exclusion is divided into two as formal and informal exclusion. Formal exclusion is depriving the employee from organizational processes, not supporting and isolating him/her; whereas informal exclusion is the situation of not including the employee in decision taking processes, concealing the issues and results of meetings, reducing the responsibilities and authorities given, and controlling subordinate-superior relations more than necessary (Halis & Demirel, 2016).

The individual's reactions to organizational exclusion consist of three stages. The first stage is the immediate stage, where exclusion is felt as pain and as a threat to belonging, self-esteem, control and meaningful existence. Belonging and self-esteem are needs associated with maintaining and developing social connections. Control and meaningful existence can be achieved regardless of social connections. Exclusion also increases anger and sadness. The second stage is the coping stage in which the individual deals with the behaviors that he/she exhibits to get through the situation and individuals reflect on their experiences of exclusion and act in ways that reinforce their threatened needs. The third and final stage is the giving up (submission) stage. In this stage, the behaviors of the

individual in case of prolonged exclusion are evaluated and the individual experiences depression, alienation from work, worthlessness and helplessness (Williams & Nida, 2011; Williams, 2009).

Although exclusion is not only a situation encountered in professional life, it is the behaviors and practices that cause employees in organizations to feel material and moral pressure and deficiency at a level that distracts them from their work life (Halis & Demirel, 2016). Organizational exclusion limits social interaction and prevents employees from establishing meaningful and lasting relationships; since it involves isolation and neglect of employees, excluded employees may experience severe physical pain, aggressive behaviors, anxiety, anger, depression and stress (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2017; Gümüştekin & Durmaz, 2021). In addition, as a result of organizational exclusion, it can be observed that employees avoid sharing information with their colleagues (Gkorezis & Bellou, 2016) and are negatively affected both physically and psychologically (Williams, 2009).

2.2. Revenge intention

Revenge can be expressed as the behaviors that an individual exhibits in order to harm the other party when he/she perceives situations such as insult, hurt or injury (Cota-McKinley et al., 2001). Revenge intention, on the other hand, means having the idea of trying to make the other party suffer as a result of perceived misbehavior (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992). It can also be expressed as an individual's tendency to harm the other party in order to alleviate the negative psychological state that the individual experiences due to reasons such as injustice, unfairness, humiliation, and exclusion.

Revenge intention is a human impulse and a powerful motivator for social behavior (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999). The perception of injustice experienced beforehand activates cognitions and emotions about revenge, the victim's identity concerns and leads to self-protective behaviors (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012). When the intention of revenge as a result of injustice turns into behavior, it aims to harm the other party indirectly or directly and is an aggressive behavior (Tekin & Kaya, 2021). Although the revenge intention depends on the personality traits of the individual, it causes the individual to show different tendencies about revenge, and the intensity of the revenge that will occur as a result of the revenge intention varies from individual to individual. Therefore, it can be said that the reactions of revenge individuals to the feeling of injustice and the revenge intention formed accordingly will also differ (Kaya & Parlak, 2020).

The behaviors exhibited by individuals with revenge intentions negatively affect intra-organizational communication and damage interpersonal trust (Nayir, 2015). In addition, individuals with revenge intentions may exhibit behaviors such as gossiping, counterproductive work behaviors, sabotage and resource theft (Karaca et al., 2017). Revenge behavior is basically a behavior aimed at eliminating inequality and injustice, and when the individual takes revenge on the organization or individual who has been harmed, it causes the thought that equality and justice are restored (Akin et al., 2012). Consequently, it can be said that revenge intention is still a desire, contains a plan and is a form of bad intention that has not yet turned into behavior.

2.3. Perceived victimization

Perceived victimization can be defined as the perception of an individual as a result of being exposed to aggressive behaviors by one or more people on a permanent or temporary basis (Aquino, 2000). In other words, perceived victimization is the individual's acceptance of himself/herself, his/her identity and victim status in the face of injustices or classifying himself/herself as a victim (Gupta & Bakhshi, 2018).

Perceived victimization is divided into two as indirect and direct victimization. If the aggressive behaviors that lead to perceived victimization do not directly target the individual, there is indirect victimization, and if they do, there is direct victimization. Examples of indirect victimization include sabotaging an individual's work, and examples of direct victimization include cursing (Aquino, 2000).

Aggressive behaviors that cause perceived victimization can be listed as threats, theft, physical and psychological violence (mobbing) and sexual harassment (Karacaoğlu et al., 2019).

There are three main sources of perceived victimization. The first one is due to the victim's personality traits of self-esteem, aggression and negativity, and because of these traits, individuals intentionally or unintentionally create social conditions that lead them to be the target of harmful behaviors. The second is that individuals have strategic behaviors in the form of apologies and revenge to protect themselves from maltreatment. The third is the presence of social status such as gender and hierarchical position (Aquino & Bommer, 2003).

Perceived victimization causes the employee to experience stress and anxiety, and it is important for the individual to struggle with victimization in order to adapt to professional processes. In the struggle against perceived victimization, first of all, the victim should establish a new system around him/her, fix the shaken parts of the system, should not see himself/herself as invincible and superior, should be away from a malicious and threatening structure, the victim should learn from the event he/she perceived and acquire a new world view and regain a positive self-image such as self-worth and coping (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983). In addition, when victimization is perceived, the employee should express it to the administrators and colleagues, explain the causes and consequences, and offer solutions. Thus, victimization can be eliminated and the losses experienced by the individual can be eliminated.

3. Methodology

3.1. Tools for data collection

Data was collected with a printed questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of four sections:

Demographic Questions: There are 4 questions about age, gender, marital status and working years in the workplace.

Organizational Exclusion: It was developed by Ferris and colleagues (2008) and used by Artar and colleagues (2019) in their study. It consists of 10 statements.

Revenge Intention: It was developed by Wade (1989) and Akin and colleagues (2012) included it in their study. It consists of 5 statements.

Perceived Victimization: Aquino and colleagues (1999) and Ülbeği and colleagues (2018) adapted it into Turkish. It consists of 8 statements.

The scales are 5-point Likert scales and the ratings given to the scales are graded from 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 5= "Strongly Agree".

3.2. Study population and sample

The population of the study consists of bank employees. Since it was not possible to reach everyone in the population, sampling was used due to time and cost constraints. In terms of facilitation in reaching the participants and saving time for the researcher, convenience sampling method was preferred (Baltacı, 2018). Within the scope of the study, printed questionnaires were distributed by hand to 500 bank employees, data was collected from 441 people, 6 flawed questionnaires were excluded from the analysis, and the analysis continued with 435 data. The return rate of the questionnaires distributed to the participants was 88.2%.

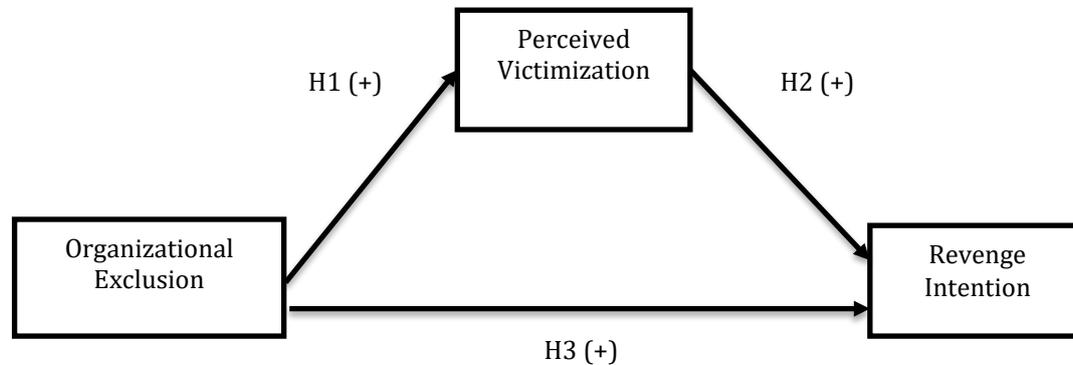
In cases where the number of the population is known exactly, it can be said that the sample size of 384 is sufficient (Tutar & Erdem, 2020; Cohen et al., 2000). Since the number of the universe is not known exactly, it can be said that the available data can represent the universe.

3.3. Research model and hypotheses

The research model in Figure 1 was constructed to guide the formulation of the hypotheses.

Figure 1

Research Model



Gümüştekin and Durmaz (2021) found that exclusion in the workplace positively affected sabotage behavior. According to Özdevecioğlu and Çelik (2009), victimization can cause exclusion by the group. As can be seen, there are not many studies on the relationship between organizational exclusion and perceived victimization. However, it can be said that the employee who is excluded from the organization may experience a perception of victimization. Based on this, the following hypothesis was designed for the relationship between organizational exclusion and perceived victimization:

H₁: Organizational exclusion has a positive effect on perceived victimization.

Revenge is the planned behavior of an individual as a response to the other party in response to the unfair or bad behavior done to him/her and aiming to harm (Nayir, 2015). Revenge is triggered by emotions such as anger and hostility, and the individual feels relief and satisfaction by inflicting the sadness and harm on the individual or individuals who caused the victimization (Gollwitzer & Denzler, 2009; Jackson et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, Aquino and Bradfield (2000) and Yılmaz (2014) concluded in their studies that perceived victimization leads to employees' revenge intentions. Seçkin (2021) found that perceived direct victimization increases revenge intention. Karacaoğlu and colleagues (2019) found that direct and indirect victimization had a positive effect on revenge intention. In this context, the following hypothesis was formed regarding the relationship between perceived victimization and revenge intention:

H₂: Perceived victimization has a positive effect on revenge intention.

It can be said that excluded individuals exhibit attitudes and behaviors such as anger, grudge, revenge and proving themselves instead of reporting negative situations to the management (Yarmacı, 2018). Elshout and colleagues (2017) concluded in their study that social exclusion affects revenge taking. Examining the literature, it is seen that there are not many studies on the relationship between organizational exclusion and revenge intention. However, it can be said that the excluded employee may want to take revenge. In this regard, the hypothesis for the relationship between organizational exclusion and revenge intention is designed as follows:

H₃: Organizational exclusion has a positive effect on revenge intention.

Organizational exclusion is a process that takes place by preventing employees from obtaining their rights, discriminating against them, keeping them away from organizational opportunities, victimizing them and harming them (Tutar et al., 2021). At the end of this process, the victimized employee may also seek revenge.

H1 hypothesis states that organizational exclusion positively affects perceived victimization; H2 hypothesis states that perceived victimization positively affects revenge intention. In this context, the following hypothesis was formed regarding the mediating effect of perceived victimization on the effect of organizational exclusion on revenge intention:

H4: Perceived victimization mediates the relationship between organizational exclusion and revenge intention.

4. Findings

4.1. Demographic findings

Findings on demographic characteristics are presented in Table-1 below.

Table 1

Demographic Findings

Gender	F (Frequency)	Percentage (%)	Marital status	F (Frequency)	Percentage (%)
Female	188	43.2	Single	144	33.1
Male	247	56.8	Married	291	66.9
Age	F (Frequency)	Percentage (%)	Working year	F (Frequency)	Percentage (%)
18-25	24	5.5	Less than 1 year	8	1.8
26-30	62	14.3	1 to 3 years	62	14.3
31-35	88	20.2	4 to 7 years	71	16.3
36-40	109	25.1	8 to 10 years	115	26.4
41-45	80	18.4	10 years and up	179	41.1
46 and up	72	16.6			

As can be seen in Table 1, 56.8% of the participants were male and 66.9% were married. Considering the age distribution, it was determined that the majority of the participants, i.e. 25.1%, were between the ages of 36-40. When the working years of the participants are evaluated, it is seen that 41.1% of them have been working at their current job for more than 10 years.

4.2. Validity and reliability

Alpha coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) was analyzed to determine the construct reliability of the scales. The alpha coefficient for the organizational exclusion scale was 0.87, for the perceived victimization scale 0.81 and for the revenge intention scale 0.89. These results show that the research scales are reliable.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to determine the validity of the research statements. Since no question with a low standardized factor loading was found in the result obtained after confirmatory factor analysis, no question was removed from the study. Then, the research model was considered as a single scale and single factor analysis was applied. Using the findings obtained, a single-factor model was applied and a comparison was made between the two analyses (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 2

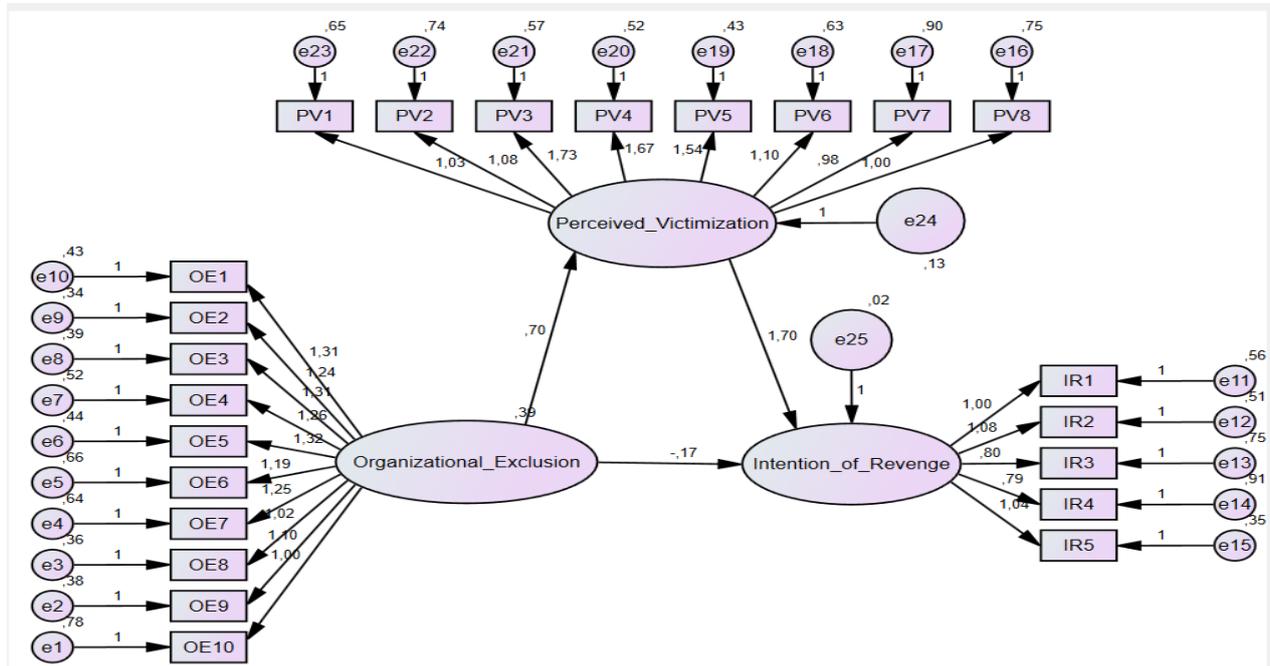
Model-Data Fit Values

	X²	ΔX²	SD	X²/df	GFI	NFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
One-factor model	1926.12	-	266	7.24	0.514	0.542	0.543	0.517	0.198
Research model p<0.01	629.13	1296.99	205	3.069	0.880	0.916	0.942	0.928	0.069

Figure 2 below shows the model-data fit values of the research model.

Figure 2

Research Model CFA Path Diagram



According to the data derived as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, the research model was distributed to three scale models and tested. The results obtained with χ^2/SD , GFI, TLI, CFI, NFI and RMSEA fit values show that the research model provides good fit validity. According to the 3-factor model, the χ^2 value is significant ($p < 0.01$). In addition, χ^2/SD (3.069) value was below 5, indicating that the research model was compatible in terms of validity. The research model fit values were determined as RMSEA = 0.069, GFI = 0.880, CFI = 0.942, TLI = 0.928, and NFI = 0.916 (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Tanaka & Huba, 1985; Bentler & Bonett, 1980; McDonald & Marsh, 1990). On the other hand, Chi-Square Test analysis was applied to the χ^2 values to determine the difference between the one-factor model and the three-factor research model. A significant difference was found in the analysis values between the single-factor analysis and the 3-factor analysis. It was put forward that there was not any common method deviation in the analysis results (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Values of Variables

	Mean	SD	CR(t)	AVE	1	2	3
Organizational Exclusion	3.12	1.133	0.914	0.744	-		
Perceived Victimization	2.81	1.271	0.933	0.754	0.509**	-	
Revenge Intention	2.97	1.002	0.922	0.715	0.549**	0.763**	-

Hair and colleagues (2010) state that the scale fulfills the measurement criterion when the factor loadings of the scale expressions are more than 0.5 in scientific research. In this study, the standardized factor loadings of the statements of the scales are above 0.5. In addition, the t values of the factor loadings at the point of parametric evaluation vary between 11.23 and 14.94. According to these values, it is seen that the research model provides validity (Hair et al., 2010).

Discriminant validity and convergent validity methods were applied to determine whether the model constructed in the study and the scale sub-dimensions were compatible.

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), in order to ensure convergent validity in an analysis, the AVE value, which is the average variance explained value in confirmatory factor analysis, must be higher than 0.50. It was found that the AVE values of the four sub-dimensions of this study were higher than 0.50 (Table 3). According to Kline (2014), for discriminant validity, the correlation values between the research scales must be lower than 0.80 and the construct reliability (CR) must be higher than 0.70. In the analysis of the three dimensions of the research scale, it was concluded that the construct reliability (CR) was higher than 0.70 and the correlation value between the dimensions was lower than 0.80 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Herr & Cramer, 1988).

4.3. Testing of research hypotheses

In order to test the research hypotheses, structural equation model analysis was applied to the research data and the findings obtained are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Structural Equation Model Findings

Variables	β	t value	SH	p
Organizational Exclusion - Perceived Victimization	0.558	5.294	0.093	***
Perceived Victimization - Revenge Intention	0.711	6.338	0.122	***
Organizational Exclusion - Revenge Intention	0.589	6.653	0.105	***

According to Table 4, organizational exclusion has a significant positive effect on perceived victimization ($\beta=0.558$, $t=5.294$, $p<0.001$). Hypothesis H1 is supported. In the second hypothesis of the study, it was concluded that perceived victimization has a significant positive effect on revenge intention ($\beta =0.711$, $t=6.338$, $p<0.001$). H2 hypothesis is supported. According to the third hypothesis of the study, it is seen that organizational exclusion has a significant positive effect on revenge intention ($\beta=0.589$, $t=6.653$, $p<0.001$). Hypothesis H3 is supported. The research findings regarding the mediating role of perceived victimization, which is the last hypothesis of the study, are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Structural Equation Model Findings

	Total Impact	Direct Impact	Mediating Effect	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	p	Result
Organizational Exclusion - Perceived Victimization	0.558	0.558	-	-	-	-	-
Organizational Exclusion - Revenge Intention	0.792	0.589	0.203	0.146	0.417	***	Has mediating effect (partly) TVE: %41.2
Perceived Victimization - Revenge Intention	0.711	0.711	-	-	-	-	-

Note: S.E., standard error; *0.05 **0.01 ***significant at 0.001 level (two-way)

As can be seen in Table 5, perceived victimization plays a partial mediating role in the effect of organizational exclusion on revenge intention ($p<0.0001$). Hypothesis H4 is supported.

Since Perceived Victimization plays a mediating role, Bootstrap analysis was performed for the mediating variable, and according to Byrne (2001), it is seen that if the questionnaire method was applied to 4350 people instead of 435 people, occupational vitality would play a mediating role and this effect would be at least 14% and at most 41%.

5. Conclusion

The study was conducted on bank employees in Kırıkkale and Kırşehir provinces. Considering the demographic results, it is observed that the majority of the participants are male, married, between the ages of 36-40 and have been working at their current job for more than 10 years. Based on these findings, it can be said that there are middle-aged, dynamic and experienced employees.

As a result of the analyses conducted for the research model, it was found that organizational exclusion positively affects perceived victimization. According to this finding, as organizational exclusion increases, perceived victimization increases. There are not enough studies on this finding in the literature and therefore, this study is a contribution to the literature. This result can be interpreted as that employees will feel more victimized due to organizational exclusion. Therefore, in order to prevent organizational exclusion, it is important for organizational administrators to lead employees in line with organizational goals and to prevent their perception of victimization by establishing a fair system.

In this study, it was concluded that perceived victimization affects revenge intention positively. According to this finding, as perceived victimization increases, revenge intention also increases. As a matter of fact, this finding is consistent with the results of Aquino and Bradfield (2000), Yılmaz (2014), Seçkin (2021) and Karacaoğlu and colleagues (2019) so it is also supported by the results of their studies. This finding can be interpreted as that the employee who perceives victimization will relieve himself by taking revenge. In this context, in order to reduce employees' perceptions of victimization and to prevent revenge intentions that may arise due to this, organizational administrators should exhibit fair management and human resources management should implement policies that ensure equality.

Within the scope of the research, it was revealed that organizational exclusion positively affects revenge intention. According to this finding, as organizational exclusion increases, so does revenge intention. Elshout and colleagues (2017) determined that social exclusion affects revenge taking and this result is similar to the finding of this study. It is observed that there are not many studies in the literature on the relationship between organizational exclusion and revenge intention. In this respect, this finding is a contribution to the literature. This situation can be interpreted as that the employee who is excluded from the organization will feel lonely and unhappy and will turn to revenge intention. In this context, in order for the employee not to have revenge intentions, the situations that will cause organizational exclusion should be eliminated.

According to the mediating effect results, it was determined that perceived victimization mediated the effect of organizational exclusion on revenge intention. It was also found that organizational exclusion affects revenge intention and perceived victimization increases this effect. Tutar and colleagues (2021) stated in their study that organizational exclusion is a process that keeps employees away from the opportunities offered by the organization and victimizes them. On the other hand, Aquino and Bradfield (2000) stated in their study that perceived victimization leads employees to revenge intentions. With this finding, it is considered that the research will make a remarkable contribution to literature.

The study has limitations regarding the work intensity of bank employees and their inability to deal with the questionnaire sufficiently due to this intensity, time and cost. In future studies, the relationships of organizational exclusion with organizational commitment, alienation from work, workplace spirituality, and climate of forgiveness can be investigated. On the other hand, it can be examined which factors will be useful for reducing revenge intentions. Research on the policies to be developed by human resources management for employees' perceptions of victimization will also contribute to the literature.

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