Understanding the Relationship between Human Resource Practices and Innovative Work Behavior: Role of Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract: The main aim of this study is to determine human resource practices for fostering innovative work behavior, to understand the theoretical reasons and to discover the process in the relationship between human resource practices and innovative work behavior. Building on organizational support theory, it is hypothesized that employees will show greater innovative work behavior if they perceive organizational support and the presence of growth opportunities. Analyzing data from a sample of 254 professionals in Turkey, the results indicated that growth opportunities had a positive significant impact on innovative work behavior and perceive organizational support mediated the relationship.

Keywords: innovative work behavior, perceived organizational support, growth opportunities, organizational support theory

1. Introduction

According to HR Outlook Survey conducted by Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) for the period between 2016-2017 [1] innovation is seen as one of the top ten organizational challenges and it seems to be one of the organizational priorities in the future. It is assumed that the employees who are innovative are the main force for the organizations and their innovative behaviors are required for an organization to achieve innovation performance [2]. Therefore, organizations have to take actions to encourage the innovation willingness of employees and promote their innovative work behavior (IWB). However, most studies have focused on innovation at the organizational level, there is a lack of comprehensive study of factors having impact on innovative behavior at the employee level [3].

IWB can be seen at all levels of an organization, going from the improvement in methods regarding one’s own job, the implementation of new procedures to building coalition for new ideas within teams, to the development of products that can increase the overall competitive position of organization in the market [4]. The reason behind the importance of IWB is that each employee, who develops, implements and reacts ideas, is the main source of innovation [5]. Therefore, there has been a growing interest among scholars trying to answer the question why and under which circumstances “ordinary” employees exert IWB in their organizations [6]. In searching for ways that organizations can increase their innovative outcomes, the issue of human resources and their management has got more attention in the past decade [7].

Because HRM practices are considered as the means through which employees’ perceptions, attitudes and behaviors in the organization are shaped [8], by investing in HRM practices and their application process, organizations expect that employees reciprocally behave innovative.

Building on social exchange theory, the norm of reciprocity [9], and the personification of organization [10], Eisenberger and his friends established the theory of organizational support theory [11,12]. Building on this theory, Eisenberger and his colleagues define perceived organizational support (POS) as ‘employees’ global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being [11, p. 500]. According to organizational support theory, when employees receive more resources and desired benefits from their work context and organization, they perceive that their organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions, in turn with higher POS, they feel more obligation to reciprocate by engaging in behaviors that benefit the organization [13].

In this study, POS will be a framework to answer the question of how HR practices influence employee behavioral and attitudinal outcomes such as IWB. To our knowledge, there are only a few studies examined POS as a mediating mechanism to explain the variance in IWB (e.g., [14]) As for Turkey, the interest in IWB has been recently grown (e.g., [15,16]) Çimen and Yücel [15] adapted De Jong and Den Hartog [17]’s multidimensional scale to be applied for teachers in Turkish educational system. Sezgin, Uçar and Duygulu [16] studied the interrelationships among knowledge sharing, trust and IWB and their results indicated that knowledge sharing had a mediating role on the relationship between trust and IWB. Main purpose of this study is exploring the effect of perceived HR practices on IWB and examining the role of a supportive organization in this relationship will be the purpose. Following the purpose,
first it will be provided a theoretical explanation for and built hypotheses on the relationship between perceptions of HR practices and IWB. After this, the method will be described to test the developed hypotheses. Finally, it will be presented and discussed the results and the implications of findings.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Innovative Work Behavior

Main literature on innovative work behavior relies on the study developed by Andrew Van de Ven in 1986. In this study, he strongly mentions that innovation in organizations requires managing attention of human, transforming their new ideas into good “currency”, solving the problem of managing part-whole relationships and establishing institutional leadership [18]. The studies on IWB were built on the assumption that an organization’s capacity to innovate was related with its employees’ capabilities and willingness [19,20]. Because IWB is considered to be a self-initiated activity, which seeks to improve existing conditions or create the new ones [5] organizations need to the IWB of whole workforce not only of employees in the positions focused in innovation [8].

IWB can be defined as individual actions directed at exploring, generating, promoting and implementing new ideas, which include new product ideas, technologies, procedures and work processes, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness and success of work role, group, organization [17, 20-22]. Scott and Bruce [20] assert that IWB can be characterized as discontinuous and interrelated behaviors that individuals are likely involved in any combination of these activities (idea generation, promotion or implementation) any time. Because IWB can be described as discretionary employee behavior, behavior that goes beyond role expectations; it is related with the employees’ motivation to innovate on the job such as development of new ways of working or new services or products [6].

IWB has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising different employees’ behaviors: the identification of problems or exploration of opportunities; the generation of ideas to solve problems or to take advantage of opportunities; the search for supporters and funds for the implementation of these ideas and the development of implementation’s plans [17,19,20,22]. Although IWB has been outlined in phases, De Jong and Den Hartog [17] found only small evidence for the distinctiveness of the different phases and they proposed high correlations between these phases. On the other hand, Veenendaal and Bondarouk [6] tested IWB as a multidimensional construct and they investigated the effect of HR practices on these dimensions of IWB. Nevertheless, this study is established on the assumption asserted by Scott and Bruce [20] innovation is a discontinuous process and IWB can described as interrelated behaviors that individuals are likely involved in any combination of innovative activities.

With reference to previous studies, a variety of factors have been studied as important determinants of individual innovation, such as organization culture and climate (e.g., [7]), perceptions of HR systems (e.g. [23,24]), relationship with their supervisors (e.g., [25,6]), job characteristics (e.g., [26]), social/group context (e.g., [27,28]) and individual differences (e.g., [29]). Regarding the investigation of the relationship between HR practices and IWB, it will be focused on an individual HR practice other than HR system such as “high commitment, high performance” or “ability-motivation-opportunity enhancing framework”. Inferring from the literature on IWB, the intermediate processes explaining how individual perceptions of HR practices and POS influence IWB remains underdeveloped.

2.2 Organizational Support Theory: Perceived Organizational Support

Organizational support theory is based on social exchange theory, the personification of organization and the norm of reciprocity [11,12]. Drawing on this theory, Eisenberger and his friends [11] proposed and established the form of the relationship between the organization and its employees, then they called it as perceived organizational support. Based on the personification of an organization, employees attribute human like characteristics to their organization and infer the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being from previous policies, practices and treatment employees received from the organization [11]. Based on the norm of reciprocity, if one person is treated well by another, the reciprocity norm requires a return of favorable treatments [9]. Regarding the relationship between employees and employers, favorable or unfavorable treatment from the organization is an indication of the extent to which the organization values an employee's contribution.

Since the first time the concept “perceived organizational support” was introduced in 1986, a lot of research have examined the effect and its relationship with a variety of predictors and organizational outcomes [30]. However, there have been few studies to understand the underlying process of how perceptions of support are formed from experiences of HR practices [31].

Because POS has been conceptualized in social exchange theory, POS initiates a social exchange process in which organizations provide material and socioemotional benefits to employees in exchange for employees’ commitment and work effort on behalf of the organization [32]. Chen and his friends [33] argue that the quality of exchange relationship between employees and their organization is particularly important because the quality depends on the resources provided by the organization and this is interpreted by the employees as signals. Then, these signals are used to estimate the amount of organizational support. In this regard, employees are in the position to decide whether they want to display a favorable effort as a reciprocation.

As it is assumed that employees who perceive support through relevant organizational resources will feel more obligated to contribute for their organizations [30], organizations are able to initiate desired behaviors by using HR practices that encourage specific attitudes and behaviors,
discourage undesired attitudes and behaviors. HR practices, which are thought to be discretionary and under the organization’s control, influence POS more than if these same practices are legally required [34]. Previous studies found that supportive HR practices (e.g. training and development, promotional opportunities, rewards), favorable job conditions, work experience (e.g. supervisor support, co-worker support) strongly predict POS [12]. Because employees interpret HR practices as an organizational investment in the employees which makes them feel obligated to reciprocate [35], employees will be expected to feel more eager to exert a behavior beneficial for both themselves and their organizations. In return, people with higher POS will feel obligated to dedicate more effort (time, energy, displaying discretionary behavior etc.) into their work and contribute more to the organization [13].

Because IWB is a form of discretionary and voluntary efforts of employees, it may be supposed to have a close relationship with POS. In this study, it will be focused on a discretionary HR practice, growth opportunities. It is hypothesized that this discretionary practice which is intended to enhance the organization's human capital will likely to be perceived as an investment in employees’ skills to initiate innovative behavior.

2.3 Human Resource Practices: Growth Opportunities

The investments and inducements that organizations provide employees are declared by HR practices. Instead of presence of HR practices, focus has been moved to the perception of HR practices by employees in a firm [36]. With reference to the causal chain described by Kehoe and Wright [37], HR practices first have to be perceived and then interpreted subjectively by employees in ways that will stimulate behavioral reactions. Therefore, HR practices can signal whether an organization supports their employees and aims to establish a social exchange relationship with employees in order to achieve organizational goals [31].

Gavino et al. [35, pp.688] describe discretionary HR practices as practices “adjusted to enhance and acquire of human capital, designed to enhance employee competencies, empowered employees and encouraged employees to identify with the goals and objectives of the organization”. One type of these HR practices is providing an employee with formal and informal training and development opportunities to improve her/his ability, to broaden her/his skills and to prepare her/him for future roles [31]. Growth opportunities have been used in previous studies as developmental experiences (e.g. [38]), as developmental opportunities (e.g. [35]) or as competence development [24]. Referring the study conducted by [39], we use the term “growth opportunities”.

Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby and Herron [40, pp. 1161] declare that the perceptions of the “adequacy of resources may affect people psychologically by leading to beliefs about the intrinsic value of the projects that they have undertaken”. Building on this, the availability of growth opportunities is viewed as a resource, and the perceived opportunities affect employees’ levels of idea generation [40]. Bysted and Jespersen [24] describe developmental experiences as competence development and argue that when employees’ creative skills get developed through competence development, they are able to detect opportunities and problems, in turn their IWB is triggered. Similarly, Veenendaal and Bondarouk, [6] claim that training and development enhance employees’ knowledge and skills, thus employees are more aware of various opportunities to explore and feel more secure in promoting and implementing new things. Also, by receiving relevant opportunities for training, employees are encouraged to advance new ideas further [41].

Regarding the development of POS, investing in human resources indicates that the organization want to continue an employment relationship with its employees. Employees view a HR practice as indicator of positive evaluations of themselves by the organization. Nevertheless, benefits available to all employees regardless of their performance would not be associated with POS [12]. Employees who have greater levels of participation in such a supportive HR practice as growth opportunities can feel higher organizational support [39]. Based on the quality of exchange relationship, this discretionary HR practice can demonstrate to employees that they are valued, and, in turn, this feeling of being appreciated impacts their motivation to exert behavior beyond their job responsibilities [14]. In this study, the effect of employee perception of growth opportunities and POS will be investigated in order to explain the variance in IWB at the individual level.

Relationship between growth opportunities and innovative work behavior through the mediating mechanism of perceived organizational support

Since IWB has been described as a voluntary and discretionary behavior, each employee can choose the amount and degree to which she or he performs it [27]. In order to motivate employees to foster IWB, POS will be expected to play the role of linking mechanism between growth opportunities and IWB.

In their comprehensive literature review, training and development has been found one of the best HR practices for enhancing IWB [42]. Comparing public and private organizations, Bysted and Jespersen [24] used the concept of competence development referring training and development and found that the effect of competence development on IWB was significantly positive, but lower in public organizations than in private organizations. However, Veenendaal and Bondarouk [6] found a negative relationship between training and development opportunities and idea generation, which is part of IWB.

Regarding the studies on the relationship between supportive HR practices and POS, Gavino et al. [35] investigated the effect of discretionary and transactional HR practices on customer commitment and employee citizenship behaviors through the mediation role of POS. They found that training and development was positively correlated with POS and concluded that POS was a function of the discretionary HR practices rather than that of the transactional practices. Using
data obtained from employees in China, Mayes et al. [31] studied the relationship between various HR practices, POS and employee satisfaction. They found that the perceptions of training contributed to the development of POS.

Concerning the relationship between POS and IWB, Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro [43] found a positive relationship between POS and constructive suggestions for helping the organization, which is part of IWB. Using data obtained from nurses and their supervisors, Xerri [14] found that POS had a direct, positive and significant relationship with IWB. Analyzing data obtained from employees and their supervisors working for hotels in China, Afsar and Badir [44] examined the relationship among person-organization fit, workplace spirituality, POS and IWB. Their results indicated that POS positively influenced IWB and person-organization fit partially mediated the relationship between POS and IWB.

Building on these arguments, it is hypothesized that if employees, through their perceptions of HR practices, conclude that their behavior is recognized and that the organization is supportive, they will likely reciprocate with discretionary behaviors such as IWB in exchange of organizational support.

H1: There is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of growth opportunities and their IWB.
H2: There is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of growth opportunities and their POS.
H3: POS will mediate the relationship between growth opportunities and IWB.

3. Method

3.1 Data Collection and Sample

The proposed hypotheses were tested by using a questionnaire survey approach. The questionnaire was prepared and elaborated by authors on the basis of a thorough literature review. Data were collected online from 254 professionals working for companies in different sectors from service to manufacturing located in different cities. The questionnaire was built using SurveyMonkey. There was no preference for any particular industry, as it is supposed that HR practices and IWB are not industry-specific. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections: 1) A short description of the purpose of the study, the guarantee about anonymity and confidentiality of research, emphasis on voluntary participation 2) Categorical and open-ended questions for demographic information 3) The items examining the variables to be investigated. Assuring the confidentiality of the respondents, it was controlled for measurement artifacts that might be present when all data are gathered in a single questionnaire. It was used techniques recommended by Podsakoff et al. [45] First, the criterion measure was placed, IWB, in the questionnaire before the predictor variables, POS and growth opportunities. Then, the items measuring demographics were inserted at the end of the questionnaire to minimize demand characteristics that might be due to the subjects’ age, gender, or organizational position.

Simple random sampling was applied in order to reach as much participants as possible. The data were analyzed by using the SPSS statistical software package. Firstly, exploratory factor and reliability analysis of all variables were conducted. Then, regression analysis was done in order to test the hypotheses. Of the 254 respondents, 54% were females and 46% were males. Almost 50% of the respondents had an education level of university while almost 47 % of the respondents had a graduate degree (MSc/MBA or PhD). The professional experience of 89% of the respondents was 5 years or more while the organizational tenure of 50% of the respondents was 5 years or less. Average professional experience was 13.57 years while average tenure in the current organization was 7.63 years (see Table 1).

3.2 Measures

Established measures were used for IWB, POS and growth opportunities. The scales used in this study have been validated in the previous studies. The scales were originally in English, and therefore they were translated and adapted to be used in Turkish business environment context.

Demographic variables: The demographic variables measured were professional experience (number of working years), organizational tenure (number of years in the current organization), business type (e.g. manufacturing, merchandising, financial services, banking etc.), title, department, education level, age and gender. All demographic variables were measured by asking the exact response other than asking the category. Only, sector (1=Public and 2=Private) and education level (1=High School, 2=College, 3=University, 4=Master of Science/Master of Business Administration, 5=Doctorate Degree) were measured by asking with response categories.

Innovative Work Behavior: Based on the literature on IWB, it was measured using a 12 - item instrument adapted from Kleysen and Street [22] and Janssen [21]. Three items taken from Kleysen and Street [22] were asked for opportunity exploration. Nine items adopted from Janssen [21] were asked for measuring the extent to which an employee engages in idea generation, idea promotion and idea implementation. IWB was measured in terms of the extent to which employees perceive that they explore, generate, introduce and implement useful ideas. The question was “How often do you perform those innovative work behaviors in the workplace?” All the items were scored on a five-point interval scale, with possible answers ranging from 1= “never” to 5= “always”. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed to determine item retention. After exploratory factor analysis, two factors were extracted: the Cronbach’s alpha level for the first dimension on “exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas” was 0.84; the Cronbach’s alpha for the second dimension on “finding support for new and useful ideas” was 0.70.

Growth Opportunities: Based on the previous literature on
the link between HR practices with IWB and POS, growth opportunities was measured using 3-item scale developed by Gavino et al. [35] The question was “Do you agree with the following arguments?” All the items were scored on a five-point interval scale, with possible answers ranging from 1= “Strongly Disagree” to 5= “Strongly Agree”. The scale had a Cronbach’s alpha level of 0.84.

**Perceived Organizational Support:** POS was measured using 16-item shorted scale developed and validated by Eisenberger et al. [11]. The question was “Do you agree with the following arguments?” All the items were scored on a five-point interval scale, with possible answers ranging from 1= “Strongly Disagree” to 5= “Strongly Agree”. Sample items from this scale were “The organization -values my contribution to its wellbeing; -really cares about my wellbeing; -would ignore any complaint from me (Reverse scored)”. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed to determine item retention. After factor analysis, the scale was transformed into shorter version which is also used common in the literature. We explored that the possible factor composing of reverse coded items did not have an acceptable reliability level. In other words, the remaining items were still the representative of POS and they were used for further analysis considered the recommendation by Rhoades and Eisenberger [12]. The positively worded 9-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha level of 0.94, which is consistent with the findings in the literature on POS (e.g. [31])

Because, all the variables had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal or above 0.70, which is acceptable level, they were used for hypotheses testing.

### 3.3 Hypotheses Testing

After exploratory factor analysis the hypotheses were revised as in the following:

- **H1a:** There is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of growth opportunities and their exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas behavior
- **H1b:** There is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of growth opportunities and their finding support for new and useful ideas behavior
- **H2:** There is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of growth opportunities and their POS.
- **H3a:** POS will mediate the relationship between employees’ perceptions of growth opportunities on their exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas behavior.
- **H3b:** POS will mediate the relationship between employees’ perceptions of growth opportunities on their finding support for new and useful ideas behavior.

These hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. In hypotheses 1a, 1b and 2, the dependent variables were regressed on the growth opportunities. In hypotheses 3a and 3b, mediation effect was tested using multiple regression analysis by the approach recommended by Baron and Kenny [46]. Then, online Sobel test (http://quantpsy.org/sobel/sobel.htm) was used to analyze the significance of mediation effect. To establish mediation, a series of regression analyses were performed following the steps suggested. First, the dependent variable is regressed on the independent variable if there is an effect that may be mediated. Second, the mediator is regressed on the independent variable. Third, the dependent variable is regressed simultaneously both on the independent variable and the mediator. Mediation is indicated when the following conditions are met: the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable in the first regression; the independent variable has a significant effect on the mediator in the second regression; the mediator has a significant effect on the dependent variable in the third regression and finally, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is less in the third regression than that in the first regression. After regression analysis, Sobel test was conducted in order to test the significance of mediation amount.

### 4. Results

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), correlations and reliabilities for all variables used in the study. In general, the results show significant correlations between dependent and independent variables and limited collinearity between independent variables. Exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas is positively related to growth opportunities (r = 0.38, p≤0.01) and perceived organizational support (r = 0.30, p≤0.01). Finding support for new and useful ideas is positively related to growth opportunities (r = 0.20, p≤0.01), perceived organizational support (r = 0.22, p≤0.01) and exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas (r = 0.48, p≤0.01). POS is positively related to growth opportunities (r = 0.52, p≤0.01) while POS is negatively related to organizational tenure (r = -0.14, p≤0.05), which is opposed to the findings by some scholars (e.g., [35,38]). As expected, professional experience and organizational tenure are positively related to age (r = 0.93, p≤0.01 and r = 0.56, p≤0.01, respectively). Organizational tenure is positively related to professional experience (r = 0.60, p≤0.01).

Because the correlation coefficient values of the studied variables (Growth opportunities, POS and IWB) weren’t above 0.8, it was suggested that there was no need for concern with respect to multicollinearity [47]. Also, Hair et al. [47] suggest that a tolerance value should be greater than 0.1; variance inflation factor (VIF) value smaller than 10; the conditional index value smaller than 30. Further analysis was done and the values to examine the effect of multicollinearity were within acceptable limits.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Reliabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Growth Opportunities</td>
<td>(0.84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceived Organizational Support</td>
<td>0.52** (0.94)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas</td>
<td>0.38** (0.30** (0.84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
opportunities have a significant relationship to the behavior of exploring, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas. This tells us that there may be other variables that contribute to explaining the variance of the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas, such other human resource practices as variables to explain the variance should be examined within future research.

Figure 1 and 2 illustrate the results of mediated regression analysis. As mentioned in the analysis section, mediation regression analysis was done following the steps suggested by Baron and Kenny [46]. In the first step, growth opportunities have a significant relationship to the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas, respectively. In the second step, growth opportunities have a positive relationship to perceived organizational support (the mediator). In the third step, the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas (the dependent variables) are one by one regressed on both growth opportunities (independent variable) and perceived organizational support (the mediator) simultaneously, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable becomes less when the mediator is controlled. These results provide full support for hypotheses 3a and 3b.

Table 2 displays the results of the regression analysis testing hypotheses 1a and 1b.

Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis-Independent Variable: Growth Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>IWB#1</th>
<th>IWB#2</th>
<th>POS3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Standardized Betas</td>
<td>Standardized Betas</td>
<td>Standardized Betas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Opportunities</td>
<td>0.377***</td>
<td>0.203**</td>
<td>0.515***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.142</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>41.734***</td>
<td>10.780**</td>
<td>90.733***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Reliabilities are on the diagonal in parentheses.

As Figure 1 illustrates, the standardized regression coefficient between growth opportunities and the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas was statistically significant as was the standardized regression coefficient between perceived organizational support and the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas. To complete the mediation analysis, Sobel test was online done. The test statistic for the Sobel test was 2.14 with an associated p-value of 0.03. The observed p-value fell below the established alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, this mediation amount was statistically significant. In other words, the relationship between growth opportunities and the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas was reduced significantly by the inclusion of perceived organizational support (the mediator). In this case, perceived organizational support partially mediated the relationship between growth opportunities and the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas, which means that growth opportunities have direct effect on the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas as well as indirect effect.

As Figure 2 illustrates, the standardized regression coefficient between growth opportunities and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas was statistically insignificant while the standardized regression coefficient between POS and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas was statistically significant. In other words, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas was partially mediated by POS. The standardized regression coefficient between Growth Opportunities and IWB#1, controlling for POS, is in parentheses. (* p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p=0.00)

Figure 1: Standardized regression coefficients for the relationship between Growth Opportunities and IWB#1 as mediated by POS. The standardized regression coefficient between Growth Opportunities and IWB#1, controlling for POS, is in parentheses. (* p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p=0.00)
the relationship between growth opportunities and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas was reduced significantly by the inclusion of POS (the mediator). To complete the mediation analysis, Sobel test was done. The test statistic for the Sobel test was 2.06 with an associated p-value of 0.04. The observed p-value fell below the established alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, this mediation amount was statistically significant. In this case, POS fully mediated the relationship between growth opportunities and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas, which means that the variance in the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas can be explained by growth opportunities through the mediating role of POS.

Combined growth opportunities and POS explain approximately 16 percent of the variance of the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas ($F = 23.61, p = 0.00, R^2 = 16\%$), while growth opportunities and POS explain approximately 6 percent of the variance of the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas ($F = 7.72, p = 0.001, R^2 = 6\%$). The results provide partial support for hypothesis 3a while fully support for hypothesis 3b, in other words POS played a mediator role in the relationship between growth opportunities and the behavior of exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas and the behavior of finding support for new and useful ideas.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test the explanation of how growth opportunities is related to IWB. It was investigated whether such HR practice impact IWB by influencing the degree to which an employees’ perception of organizational support. The results supported the hypotheses. The relationship between growth opportunities and IWB was mediated by POS. It is important because most research focused on the mediation effect of climate, organizational culture between HR practices and innovative work behavior. In this study, POS was used as a mediation mechanism to explain the impact of one of HR practices, growth opportunities, on IWB. In this regard, this study using POS as a mediating mechanism to explain the relationship between HR practices and IWB has made contribution for previous studies done in Turkey. Because most research focused on the directs effects of POS and they revealed that POS has a direct effect on employee attitudes and behaviors such as engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intention (see for details, [47,48]). Furthermore, the results are consistent with other studies examining the mediating role of POS in the relationship between HR practices and employee attitudes and behaviors (e.g. [31,35,38]). Also, in this study, POS was found as one of the antecedents of IWB while common antecedents.

In the literature, IWB is defined as a container for several behavioral sets. Although earlier studies have identified multiple dimensions for IWB, most studies have reported findings suggesting that IWB is a one-dimensional variable based on high correlation between sets of behaviors for IWB [17]. However, Veenendaal and Bondarouk [6] considered IWB as multiple dimensions and they identified three dependent variables: idea generation, idea championing and idea application. Nevertheless, in this study, it has been found that IWB has two dimensions: 1- Exploration, generation and implementation of new and useful ideas 2- Finding support for new and useful ideas. In other words, “idea generation and idea application” were emerged as one dimension, “idea championing” was emerged as the other dimension. These different dimensions require different types of work, different employee characteristics, and different behaviors [6]. Also, with reference to the findings, the effect of growth opportunities on these two dimensions of IWB have different levels.

As for the explanatory power of models, in the literature the values of $R^2$ explain the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variable. In this study, the values of $R^2$ for models are 16% (model 1) and 6% (model 2) respectively, these results tell us that most of the data variation could not be explained by the regression models. In this regard, Mayes et al. [31] claim that because of widely available opportunity and benefit of training, employees provided with numerous opportunities for development may not perceive those opportunities as the result of their organization’s support and commitment to them personally.

6. Conclusion

For organizations, employees’ discretionary behaviors are valuable, going beyond the defined behaviors that cover their day-to-day activities in the workplaces. Because organizations cannot be innovative without their employees [18], empirical results should be designed to open the black box of how HR practices to foster IWB, in turn innovation performance at the organizational level. This paper aimed to understand the linking mechanism between one of HR practices (growth opportunities) and IWB at the employee level. Nevertheless, other HR practices such as supervisor support, participative decision structures, a fair reward and recognition system, information sharing etc. may be included to explain the variance in IWB of employees. Also, exploring separately the dimensions of IWB makes it possible to determine how perceived HR practices can stimulate different behavioral types related to idea exploration, generation, implementation and finding support for these ideas. Therefore, future research will benefit from further exploration of this issue and could also provide more answers on how IWB and its specific dimensions are encouraged by HR practices.

Even if early studies on the relationship between HR and innovation started in USA, recent studies have been done in Europe (especially in Netherlands and Spain) and in China, the studies should be repeated with different HR practices in Turkey to understand the impact of practices on employees’ innovativeness.
References


