The Relationships among Supervisor Support, Affective Commitment, and Altruistic Behavior

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Purpose: The main purpose of this study is to research the mediating effect of "employees' affective commitment to the organization" in the relationship between "perceived supervisor support" and "these employee's altruistic behavior". **Design/methodology/approach:** Dataset of the study consisted of 215 questionnaires gathered from nurses working in two private hospitals in Ankara. SPSS statistical program was used for data entry and analyses. "Hierarchical regression" and "Sobel test" analyses were employed for hypothesis-testing in this study. **Findings:** According to the analysis results in terms of participants in this study, nurses' perception of support from immediate supervisors directly affects their affective commitment to the hospital in a significant and positive way. And then, their affective commitment has a direct, significant and positive effect on their altruistic behavior. In addition, perceived supervisor support affects nurses' altruistic behavior in a significant and positive way both directly and indirectly through their affective commitment. Therefore, nurses' affective commitment to the hospital has a partial mediating role in the mechanism established within the scope of the study. **Discussion:** In this study, answer is sought for the question of "is it possible to contribute to the hospital through the enhancing effects of an increase in nurses' perception level of supervisor support on their levels of affective commitment to the hospital and altruistic behavior?". According to the research results, it is possible to contribute to the hospital thanks to the mechanism established in this study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this study is to research the mediating effect of nurses' affective commitment to the hospital in the relationship between their perception of support from immediate supervisors and their altruistic behavior. Empirical studies examining the relation between perceived supervisor support and employees' affective commitment to the organization (e.g.: Adu et al., 2018; Alkhateri et al., 2018; Ece & Gültekin, 2018; Ferreira, 2015; Khalid, 2020; Nichols et al., 2016; Nisar et al., 2020; Rabbani et al., 2017; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003), and the relations between perceived supervisor support and employees' altruistic behavior or organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (e.g.: Akram et al., 2018; Arshad et al., 2021; Pandey & Chairungruang, 2020; Pasamehmetoglu et al., 2017; Profili et al., 2016; Sultana et al., 2016; Tremblay & Gibson, 2016; Uzun, 2018) were found in the literature. Empirical studies investigating the relations between employees' affective commitment to the organization or group and their altruistic behavior or OCBs (e.g.: Ahmad et al., 2020; Akar, 2018; Ghosh et al., 2012; Görmüş & Özer, 2021; Gupta et al., 2016; Kim, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Ohana, 2016; Yu-Ping et al., 2020) were also found in the literature.

Wang (2014), in a research on the industrial sector in China, investigated the mediating role of employees' commitment to the organization in the effect of perceived supervisor support on their OCBs. Hashigami and Tsujimoto (2018), in a study on factories in Japan, also investigated the mediating effect of employees' affective commitment to the organization on the relationship between perceived supervisor support and their OCBs. In the research model of this study conducted on nurses in Turkey, perceived supervisor support is the

independent variable in the same way as the other two studies (Hashigami & Tsujimoto, 2018; Wang, 2014). However, unlike these two studies, the outcome variable in this research model is altruistic behavior, which is considered as the basic dimension of OCBs (e.g.: Organ, 1988) and the role behavior in the nursing profession (e.g.: Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) in the literature. In addition, Wang (2014) discussed the variable of organizational commitment as a whole structure. In this study's research model, affective commitment, which is a dimension of organizational commitment and a critical precursor to OCBs (Odoardi et al., 2019: 104), was designed as a mediator variable, just as Hashigami and Tsujimoto (2018) did.

In the organizational behavior literature, perceived supervisor support (e.g.: Taş et al., 2021), affective commitment to the organization (e.g.: Mumcu & Alici, 2016) and altruistic behavior (e.g.: Özkara, 2019) are considered as factors contributing to the organization. In this study, answer is sought for the question of "is it possible to contribute to the hospital through the enhancing effects of an increase in nurses' perception level of supervisor support on their levels of affective commitment to the hospital and altruistic behavior?".

Ho (2017) stated that many studies in the literature tried to explain the relationship between managerial behaviors and employees' helping behaviors based on the Social Exchange Theory. Unlike the general trend in the literature, Ho (2017) explained the relationship between aforementioned variables in the light of the Self-Determination Theory moving of the basic psychological needs of the employees (Ho, 2017). Within the framework of this study, both Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), based on the Norm of Reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) are considered. In this study, it is expected that nurses' sense of belonging to the hospital will get stronger, and so on they will exhibit more helpful behaviors towards its members for fulfilling the tasks or solving problems in it without any obligation and expecting any return, but with their free will, just in order to contribute to it if their perception of informational, emotional and material support from immediate supervisors increases.

In the following part of the study, theoretical information on organizational support, supervisor (leader) support, organizational commitment, affective commitment to the organization, OCBs, and altruistic behavior will be explained on the axis of research purpose in order to create the research model and to develop the hypothesis. In addition to Social Exchange and Self-Determination theories, the importance of the study for the nursing profession will also be mentioned. Furthermore, results of empirical studies examining the relationships between the variables in this study's research model or the ones linked with them will be included in the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Perceived Supervisor Support

Giray and Şahin (2012) divide workplace support into three: supervisor (leader) support, peer support, and organizational support (Giray & Şahin, 2012). Organizational support theoreticians have stated that the concept of perceived organizational support is based on Social Exchange Theory taking the Norm of Reciprocity as a basis (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). According to Social Exchange Theory, one of the parties will desire to offer the other party more than what (s)he gets in order to increase the facilities provided to him or her if (s)he considers such facilities offered by the other party to him or her as valuable (Blau, 1964). While employees' perception of support from their supervisors is referred to as "perceived supervisor support", employees' perception of support from their organization is referred to as "perceived organizational support" (Akın, 2008: 143). Positive treatments from supervisors contribute to employees' perception of organizational support, but negative treatments weaken it (Erenler Tekmen, 2016). According to Organizational Support Theory, supervisor support is a prominent indicator of organizational support perception (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This study focuses on supervisor support.

Supervisor support can be defined as *"employees' perception of informational, emotional and material support from their supervisors"*. Informational support covers supervisors' knowledge, abilities and experiences in addition to reward, punishment, feedback and guidance exercised by them for improving employees' efficiency. Material support includes the time, the supervisors spare for their employees, as well as items, equipment and financial aids providing for them. Emotional support expresses some acts that the supervisors value their employees, pay attention to them, have an affection for them, respect them and provide them necessary help in order to enable their employees to overcome the difficulties (e.g.: stress and conflict) they encounter at work.

It can be in both verbal and non-verbal way (e.g.: hand shaking, embracing and hugging) (Bhanthumnavin, 2000: 160). Supervisor support can be considered as *"support from immediate supervisors to employees"* (Yoon & Lim, 1999: 925). This study focuses on support from immediate supervisor.

Supervisors actually aim to increase employees' contribution to achieving organizational goals by providing support to them in line with their needs (Taş & Özkara, 2020: 479). According to empirical studies in the literature, when the perception of supervisor (leader) support becomes stronger, the levels of variables of organizational cynicism (Özkara et al., 2019), employees' intention to quit (Alkhateri et al, 2018; Nichols et al., 2016), their turnover (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) and burnout (Uzun, 2018), which harm the organization, decrease, on the other hand, those of trust in supervisor (Akram et al., 2018), quality of leader-member exchange (Özkara et al., 2019), commitment to supervisor (Akram et al., 2018; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003), organizational identification (Uzun, 2018), employees' job performance (Adu et al., 2018), their work-life balance (Ferreira, 2015; Profili et al., 2016), voice behavior (Nisar et al., 2020) and work engagement (Sultana et al., 2016), which contribute to the organization, increase. In the literature, there are also some empirical studies examining the relationships between perceived supervisor support and organizational commitment (e.g.: Arshad et al., 2021; Ece & Gültekin, 2018; Rabbani et al., 2017) or OCBs (e.g.: Akram et al., 2018; Arshad et al., 2021; Sultana et al., 2016; Tremblay & Gibson, 2016; Uzun, 2018).

2.2. Altruistic Behavior

Organ (1988) divides OCBs into five sub-dimensions: altruism, sportmanship, courtesy, civic virtue, and conscientiousness (Organ, 1988). This study discusses the concept of altruism on the axis of OCBs. Because according to Organ (1988), altruism is the basic dimension of OCBs. And moreover, it includes voluntary behaviors to help the members of the organization with its tasks or problems without expecting anything in return (Organ, 1988: 8). Considering the topic of organizational commitment, by nature, these behaviors are inevitable consequences of affective commitment, which is another variable in this study. According to Gürel (2012: 41), employees' helping behaviors in organizations are as follows:

- Helping their co-workers who have not been able to come to work,
- Helping others who have heavy work load,
- Helping new workers to adapt even though not required for them to do so,
- Being always ready to help those around them,
- Helping others who have problem with their work.

In the organizational behavior literature, it is emphasized that altruistic behavior is the core element of the nursing profession, because there are helping or self-sacrificing behaviors in the nature of this profession. From this point of view, altruistic behavior, which is basically one of the extra role behaviors, is considered as a role behavior in the context of the nursing profession (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Although genetic factors (e.g.: disposition) are effective on the level of individual's altruistic behavior, this behavior can be improved (Avcı et al., 2013; Özkara, 2019). Considering that altruistic behavior contributes to organizations (e.g.: Pandey & Chairungruang, 2020), its antecedents gain importance.

According to empirical studies in the literature, organizational justice (Tziner & Sharoni, 2014), trust in supervisor (Akram et al., 2018), organizational trust (Ahmad et al., 2020), transformational leadership (Lee et al., 2018), perceived organizational support (Gupta et al., 2016), organizational identification (Uzun, 2018), organizational commitment (Güçel, 2013), corporate social responsibility (Ahmad et al., 2020) and employees' work engagement (Sultana et al., 2016) are positive predictors of their OCBs. Moreover, percieved reciprocal support in mentoring (Ghosh et al., 2012), workplace friendship (Yu-Ping et al., 2020), authentic leadership (Özkara, 2019), fun at work (Profili et al., 2016), supervisor's political skill (Özkara, 2019) and employees' work-life balance (Profili et al., 2016) are positive predictors of their altruistic behavior. In the literature, there are also some empirical studies examining whether perceived supervisor support (e.g.: Pandey & Chairungruang, 2020; Pasamehmetoglu et al., 2017; Profili et al., 2016) and affective commitment to the organization or group (e.g.: Ghosh et al., 2012; Yu-Ping et al., 2020) are antecedents of altruistic behavior.

2.3. Perceived Supervisor Support and Altruistic Behavior

According to empirical studies in the literature, there are significant and positive relationships between perceived supervisor support, and employees' OCBs (e.g.: Akram et al., 2018; Arshad et al., 2021; Sultana et

al., 2016; Tremblay & Gibson, 2016; Uzun, 2018) or their altruistic behavior (e.g.: Pandey & Chairungruang, 2020; Pasamehmetoglu et al., 2017; Profili et al., 2016). Besides, perceived supervisor support significantly and positively affects both employees' OCBs (e.g.: Akram et al., 2018; Sultana et al., 2016; Tremblay & Gibson, 2016; Uzun, 2018) and their altruistic behavior (e.g.: Pasamehmetoglu et al., 2017; Profili et al., 2016). In the literature, altruistic behavior is considered as the basic dimension of OCBs (e.g.: Organ, 1988) and the role behavior in the nursing profession (e.g.: Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Based on theoretical and empirical studies in the literature, in this study, it is expected that nurses' perception of support from immediate supervisors will directly affect their altruistic behavior in a significant and positive way.

Studies (e.g.: Pasamehmetoglu et al., 2017; Profili et al., 2016) in the literature tried to explain the relationship between perceived supervisor support and employees' altruistic behavior by Social Exchange Theory taking the Norm of Reciprocity as a basis. In this study, unlike the trend in the literature, the relationship between these two variables is based on not only Social Exchange Theory but also Self-Determination Theory. This study investigates the mediating role of nurses' affective commitment to the hospital in the relationship between the aforementioned variables by moving from Self-Determination Theory.

2.4. Affective Commitment

In the context of organizational behavior field, the phenomenon of commitment is divided some categories into commitment to supervisor (e.g.: Akram et al., 2018; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003), group (e.g.: Ohana, 2016; Yu-Ping et al., 2020), work (e.g.: Ceylan et al., 2021; Tziner & Shkoler, 2018), occupation (e.g.: Meyer et al., 1993), and organization (e.g.: Ceylan et al., 2021; Ece & Gültekin, 2018; Koçak & Koç, 2018; Samo et al., 2019; Uygur & Koç, 2010). This study focuses on commitment to the organization, i.e., organizational commitment. Organizational commitment can be divided into three sub-dimensions: affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment deals with employee's emotional relationship with the organization. It covers to employee's emotional attachment to the organization, his or her identification with it and participation in it. Continuance commitment refers to the commitment based on the costs that the employee will bear if (s)he leaves the organization. It occurs if the employee realizes that leaving the organization will be very costly for him or her. Normative commitment refers to the employee's obligation to the organization for moral and cultural reasons. It means that the right thing for the employee is to stay in the organization because of this obligation (Meyer et al., 1993: 544).

According to Social Exchange Theory, positive or beneficial actions of supervisor and subordinate result in a high-quality exchange between the parties by creating a sense of obligation for them (Settoon et al., 1996). According to Self-Determination Theory, the underlying reason for employees' behavior is free will instead of the feeling of obligation. In other words, people want to feel like they have control over their behavior. When a behavior that is personally preferred and enjoyed turns into an obligation later, people's motivation decreases. This theory mainly focuses on the benefits of intrinsic motivation factors to the organization and the harms of extrinsic motivation factors to it (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Considering the fact that altruistic behavior is based on volunteerism, this study focuses only the affective commitment dimension of organizational commitment, since employees' affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization arise from their free will, needs, and moral or cultural reasons, respectively. Also, employees' affective commitment to the organization is based on no self-interest, while continuance and normative commitment to the organization are cost-based and obligation-based, respectively.

The level of organizational commitment is influenced by personal (e.g.: demographics), non-organizational (Özdemir, 2021: 235) and organizational (e.g.: organizational justice) (Ay & Koç, 2014: 69) factors. According to Ceylan et al. (2021), self-confidence, organizational trust, delegation, participation in decisions, autonomy, and personnel empowerment positively predict employees' affective commitment to the organization. Moreover, employees' affective commitment to the organization positively affects their work commitment while it negatively affects their intention to quit. According to other empirical studies in the literature, when employees' affective commitment to the organization is stronger, their intention to quit (Alkhateri et al., 2018; Nichols et al., 2016) decreases, but their job performance (Adu et al., 2018) increases. In addition, transformational leadership (Kim, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Paolucci et al., 2018) and perceived organizational support (Gupta et al., 2016) raise employees' affective commitment to the organization. In the literature, there

are also some empirical studies examining the relationships between affective commitment to the organization and perceived supervisor support (e.g.: Adu et al., 2018; Alkhateri et al., 2018; Ece & Gültekin, 2018; Ferreira, 2015; Khalid, 2020; Nichols et al., 2016; Rabbani et al., 2017; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) or altruistic behavior (e.g.: Ghosh et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2018).

2.5. Perceived Supervisor Support and Affective Commitment

According to empirical studies (e.g.: Adu et al., 2018; Ece & Gültekin, 2018; Ferreira, 2015; Khalid, 2020; Nisar et al., 2020; Rabbani et al., 2017; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) in the literature, there are significant and positive relationships between perceived supervisor support and employees' affective commitment to the organization. Moreover, perceived supervisor support significantly and positively affects employees' affective commitment to the organization (e.g.: Adu et al., 2018; Alkhateri et al., 2018; Ece & Gültekin, 2018; Ferreira, 2015; Nichols et al., 2016; Rabbani et al., 2017). In the literature, there are empirical studies examining the relationship between perceived supervisor support and employees' affective commitment to the hospital on healthcare professionals (Adu et al., 2018), frontline hospital workers (Nichols et al., 2016) and nurses (Ferreira, 2015).

Based on theoretical and empirical studies in the literature, in this study, it is expected that nurses' perception of support from immediate supervisors will directly affect their affective commitment to the hospital in a significant and positive way.

2.6. Affective Commitment and Altruistic Behavior

According to empirical studies in the literature, there are significant and positive relationships between employees' affective commitment to the organization, and their OCBs (e.g.: Ahmad et al., 2020; Akar, 2018; Gupta et al., 2016; Kim, 2014) or altruistic behavior (e.g.: Ghosh et al., 2012; Görmüş & Özer, 2021; Lee et al., 2018). Additionally, employees' affective commitment to the group significantly and positively affects both their citizenship behaviors towards the group (Ohana, 2016) and altruistic behavior (Yu-Ping et al., 2020). Furthermore, employees' affective commitment to the organization significantly and positively affects both their OCBs (e.g.: Akar, 2018; Gupta et al., 2016; Kim, 2014; Lee et al., 2018) and altruistic behavior (e.g.: Ghosh et al., 2012; Görmüş & Özer, 2021). According to Organ (1988), altruistic behavior is the core dimension of OCBs. Van Dyne and LePine (1998) consider altruistic behavior as "role behavior" rather than "extra role behavior" in the context of the nursing profession. Gupta et al. (2016) examined the relationship between affective commitment to the hospital and OCBs on nurses.

Based on theoretical and empirical studies in the literature, in this study, it is expected that nurses' affective commitment to the hospital will directly affect their altruistic behavior in a significant and positive way. In the previous part of the study, the bilateral relations between the variables in the research model or the variables associated with them were explained. In the next part, the research results of the empirical studies testing similar mediated-models to this study's research model will be covered, and thus the research model will be established.

2.7. Studies Testing Similar Research Models

According to the research results of empirical studies carried out at a group level, employees' affective commitment to the group is the mediator variable in the relations between workplace friendship (Yu-Ping et al., 2020) or procedural justice (Ohana, 2016), and their citizenship behaviors or alturistic behavior. According to empirical studies at an organizational level, employees' affective commitment to the organization is the mediator variable in the relations between transformational leadership (Lee et al., 2018), perceived reciprocal support in mentoring (Ghosh et al., 2012) or perceived organizational support (Gupta et al., 2016), and their OCBs or altruistic behavior. Gupta et al. (2016) statistically prove that the relationship between nurses' perception of support from the hospital and their OCBs is mediated by their affective commitment to the hospital. According to some other empirical studies (Alkhateri et al., 2018; Nichols et al., 2016) at an organizational level, the relationship between perceived supervisor support and employees' intention to quit is mediated by their affective commitment to the organization. In addition, the relationship between perceived supervisor support and employees' OCBs is mediated by their work engagament (Sultana et al., 2016), trust in supervisor (Akram et al., 2018), organizational identification (Uzun, 2018), organizational commitment (Wang, 2014) and their affective commitment to the organization (Hashigami & Tsujimoto, 2018).

3. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

In the light of all this information, this study's research model was established as shown in Figure 1 and the research hypothesis was developed.
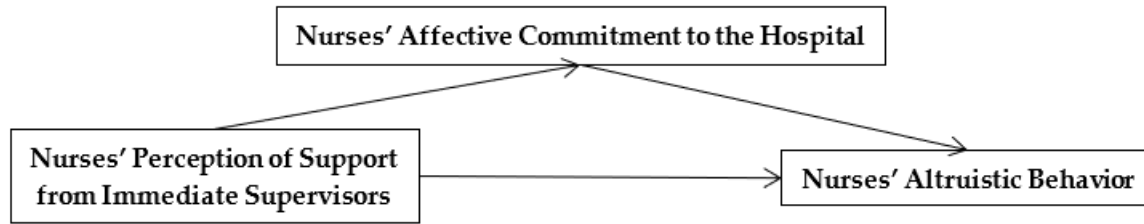

Figure 1. The Research Model of the Study

Hypothesis: Nurses' affective commitment to the hospital has a mediating role in the effect of their perception of support from immediate supervisors on their altruistic behavior.

4. METHOD

4.1. Sample

Research universe consists of 330 nurses working in two private hospitals in Ankara. Sampling was not done for the purpose of reaching the entire population. Questionnaires were distributed to 292 nurses. 248 nurses among them returned. Return rate is about 85%. However, only 215 of them were filled properly. Size of the dataset will be definite after the preliminary analyses.

4.2. Materials

In this study, 11-item scale developed by Giray and Şahin (2012) to measure the level of perceived supervisor support, 6-item sub-scale of organizational commitment scale developed by Meyer et al. (1993) to measure the level of affective commitment, and 5-item sub-scale of OCBs scale developed by Gürel (2012) to measure the level of altruistic behavior were used. Cronbach Alpha coefficients of three scales in these studies on white-collar workers in the financial sector in Turkey, nurses in Canada and employees in private sector companies in Turkey were .94, .82, and .85, respectively. In this study, nurses scored the survey questions of three scales on a 5-point Likert-type scale of "1" (absolutely disagree) to "5" (totally agree). Nurses evaluated the support to them from their immediate supervisors and their own affective commitment to the hospital and altruistic behavior. Finally, nurses answered one demographical question about their gender.

4.3. Procedure and Analysis Approach

After approval with no 61950 dated December 8th, 2021 had been obtained from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Ethics Commission, questionnaires were distributed and collected by closed envelope method from 13.12.2021 to 24.12.2021. Quantitative research was carried out in this study. SPSS statistical program was used for data entry and analyses. Validity, reliability, Pearson correlation analyses were employed after preliminary analyses. Then, the research hypothesis was tested via "hierarchical regression analysis" and "Sobel test in an interactive environment".

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Preliminary Analyses

3rd, 4th and 5th items, which are reverse-coded in 6-item "affective commitment to the organization" scale, were recoded at first. And then, four-stage method, which is formed from "accuracy of dataset", "missing data", "normality test" and "multivariate outlier" analyses suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), was pursued. In this study, it is assumed that the dataset has a feature of normal distribution considering that the kurtosis and skewness values of all scale items vary in the range of ±1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). This study's dataset size was finalized as 215 after preliminary analyses. Thus, 65.15% of the research universe, i.e. approximately two-thirds, was reached. In this study, it is assumed that this rate is representative of the research universe. 190 and 25 of the participants in research's dataset are female and male, respectively.

5.2. *Validity Analysis*

Table 1. Overall Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Items	Factors		
	1	**2**	**3**
PSS1	.774		
PSS2	.808		
PSS3	.772		
PSS4	.793		
PSS5	.830		
PSS6	.787		
PSS7	.834		
PSS8	.873		
PSS9	.881		
PSS10	.863		
PSS11	.823		
AC1		.656	
AC2		.627	
AC3		.769	
AC4		.864	
AC5		.800	
AC6		.640	
AB1			.851
AB2			.894
AB3			.867
AB4			.847
AB5			.827

Notes: KMO: 0.927; Barlett's Test of Sphericity [χ^2 (231) = 4095.185; p<0.001]; Total Variance Explained: %71.736; Abbreviations: PSS: Perceived Supervisor Support, AC: Affective Commitment to the Organization, AB: Altruistic Behavior

It is seen in Table 1 that KMO Barlett's test result is 0.927, that is, it is higher than a minimum threshold value of 0.50, and result of Barlett's test of spherecity is also significant. Therefore, exploratory factor analysis can be applied to the dataset. According to the results of the analysis, all items of three variables in the research model are categorized under the variables in accordance with their theories and they explain approximately 72% of the total variance, that is, it is higher than a minimum threshold rate of 50%. Moreover, the smallest factor load value calculated for the items is 0.627, that is, it is higher than a minimum threshold value of 0.40 (Hair et al., 2018). Hence, validities of all three scales are satisfied.

5.3. *Reliability and Correlation Analyses*

As seen in Table 2, Cronbach Alpha coefficients of PSS, AC and AB scales are .96, .86, and .94, respectively, that is, they are higher than a minimum threshold value of .70 (Hair et al., 2018). Thus, all scales are reliable. According to Pearson correlation analysis results, there are not any significant relations between gender and variables in the research model. However, there are significant and positive relations between PSS and AC (r= .39; p<.01), AC and AB (r= .45; p<.01), PSS and AB (r= .42; p<.01).

Table 2. Results of Reliability and Pearson Correlation Analyses

Variables	μ	SD	1	2	3	4
Gender	-	-	-			
PSS	3.29	1.18	.062	(.96)		
AC	3.23	1.10	-.003	.39**	(.86)	
AB	3.69	1.16	.021	.42**	.45**	(.94)

Notes: **p<.01; Abbreviations: μ: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, PSS: Perceived Supervisor Support, AC: Affective Commitment to the Organization, AB: Altruistic Behavior; Values in brackets are Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients.

5.4. Testing the Research Hypothesis

Four-condition method suggested by Baron & Kenny (1986) was pursued for testing the research hypothesis. As seen in Table 3 and Figure 2, PSS directly affects both AB (β= .428; p<.01) and AC (β= .397; p<.01) in a significant and positive way. Also, AC directly affects AB (β= .332; p<.01) in a significant and positive way. Hence, three conditions for mediation were satisfied. When the variable of AC is included to the regression equation, PSS still influences AB in a significantly and positively, however, with lessened effect (β= .297; p<.01). Therefore, the fourth condition was also satisfied. According to the results of Sobel test (Z=4.004; p<.001) employed after satisfying four conditions, the mediation effect was statistically significant (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2010). In this way, the research hypothesis was supported. Also, AC is a partial mediating variable in the established mechanism.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	T	P	R	R²	F
PSS	AB	**.428****	6.920	**.000**	.428	.184	47.885
PSS	AC	.397**	6.317	**.000**	.397	.158	39.908
AC	AB	.332**	5.217	**.000**	.526	.276	40.496
PSS	AB	**.297****	4.658	**.000**	.526	.276	40.496
AC		.450**	7.352	**.000**	.450	.202	54.048

Notes: p<.01**; Abbreviations: PSS: Perceived Supervisor Support, AC: Affective Commitment to the Organization, AB: Altruistic Behavior
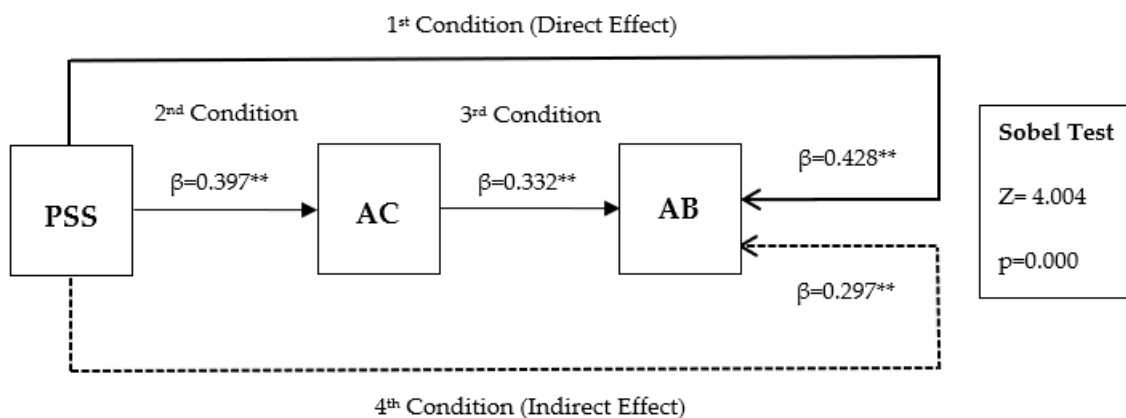
Figure 2. Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Notes: **p<.01; β= Standardized Regression Coefficient; Abbreviations: PSS: Perceived Supervisor Support, AC: Affective Commitment to the Organization, AB: Altruistic Behavior

6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the mediating role of nurses' affective commitment to the hospital in the effect of their perception of support from immediate supervisors on their altruistic behavior. Some studies (e.g.: Ghosh et al., 2012; Gupta et al., 2016; Hashigami & Tsujimoto, 2018; Uzun, 2018; Wang, 2014) examining the relationships among variables in this study's research model in a similar mechanism were found. However, any other study discussing them in the same mechanism was not found. Original model increases the significance of the study. Altruism encompasses self-sacrificing behaviors. In the literature, self-sacrificing behaviors are of great importance in the context of the nursing profession. Conducting the study on nurses makes it more valuable for the field of organizational behavior.

This study can be based on both Social Exchange and Self-Determination theories. Nevertheless, it could be said that it would be more accurate to base the model on Self-Determination Theory rather than Social Exchange Theory, since Social Exchange Theory explains the underlying reason for the positive behaviors exhibited by the employees with the sense of obligation brought along by the Norm of Reciprocity, while Self-Determination Theory explains it with the internal factors and employees' free will rather than the external factors. Internal factors and free will are essential for the phenomena of affective commitment to the organization and altruistic behavior, which are discussed in this study. If the employee is emotionally attached to his/her organization, that is, if there is an emotional bond between him/her and his/her organization, (s)he will not display any self-interested behavior towards his/her organization. By altruistic behavior's nature, it is voluntarily exhibited without any purpose of personal benefit.

According to the analysis results in terms of participants in this study, all coefficients of correlation and regression are significant and positive in accordance with the literature. Moreover, nurses' affective commitment to the hospital has a partial mediating role as expected. Moving from the functional definitions of the variables in this study's research model, the results of the research can be summed up as follows:

- When nurses' perception level of informational, emotional and material support from immediate supervisors increases, their level of sense of belonging to the hospital also rises.
- When nurses' level of sense of belonging to the hospital grows stronger, they exhibit more helpful behaviors towards its members for fulfilling the tasks or solving problems in it without any obligation and expecting any return, but with their free will, just in order to contribute to it.
- When nurses' perception level of informational, emotional and material support from immediate supervisors goes up, they display more helpful behaviors towards the members of the hospital for fulfilling the tasks or solving problems in it without any obligation and expecting any return, but with their free will, just in order to contribute to it. An increment in nurses' level of sense of belonging to the hospital contributes to this relationship.

In the light of all this information, the following determinations, implications, limitations and suggestions are made in this study:

- It is possible to contribute to the hospital through the enhancing effects of an increase in nurses' perception level of supervisor support on their levels of affective commitment to the hospital and altruistic behavior.
- Informational, emotional and material support to the nurses from their immediate supervisors have the key roles in making these nurses more emotionally attached to the hospital, and so on their exhibiting more helping behaviors, and thus contributing to the hospital. Hence, it is important for achieving organizational success in hospitals to assign the nurse supervisors who have the features to support their subordinates informationally, emotionally and materially, and accordingly to implement the supervisor development programs. However, they alone are not enough to achieve organizational success, in the literature review, as it is seen that personal characteristics can be effective in the emotional attachment of subordinate employees to their organization and sacrificing behavior they exhibit. From this point of view, altruistic disposition or demographics of subordinate nurses may be added to this study's research model as a moderator variable in future studies. In addition, the research model may be tested in state hospitals and western or far eastern societies with different cultural characteristics from Turkey. It may also be beneficial to test the research model in

different occupational groups, such as soldiers, police and teachers, where self-sacrificing behaviors are prominent. The results obtained shall then be compared.

- There are some limitations in this study. The most important limitation of the study can be considered as the nurses' self-assessments of questions regarding the altruistic behavior exhibited by them. In future studies, the altruistic behavior of nurses may be evaluated by their colleagues and supervisors instead of these nurses. And then the results shall be compared.

- Quantitative research was conducted in this study. However, neurological studies are needed to clearly reveal which theory (Social Exchange or Self-Determination) is more dominant in explaining the relationships between managerial behaviors and helping behaviors of employees.

- Females are predominant in nursing profession due to the social perspective of it (Martinez-Corts et al., 2021: 29). In accordance with this perspective, the number of women in the dataset of the study is much higher than that of men. This is another limitation of the study, so the research model may also be tested in different occupational groups, where the numbers of men and women are more evenly distributed or the number of men is much more. And then the results shall be compared.

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