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From victims to survivors: Does job passion mitigate the impact of social undermining on turnover intention?

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Abstract

Aim/purpose – Social undermining actions in workplaces may adversely affect employee performance and job satisfaction, eventually leading them to leave the organization. This study aims to examine whether the level of job passion exhibited by employees targeted by social undermining impacts their inclination to remain employed at the organization.

Design/methodology/approach – The participants are 401 employees in the civil defense industry. Data have been analyzed using the SmartPLS and SPSS programs.

Findings – The findings have revealed that job passion moderated the impact of social undermining on employee turnover intention. Specifically, harmonious job passion has been found to reverse the effect of social undermining on turnover intention, while obsessive passion has been found to aggravate this effect.

Research implications/limitations – In addition to taking caution to prevent social undermining, managers should also support employees' harmonious passion while avoiding obsessive passion to mitigate the negative impact of undermining behaviors on turnover intention.

Originality/value/contribution – The main aim of this study is to extend the current literature by demonstrating that social undermining, regardless of its source, results in an increased desire to leave the organization. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of harmonious passion as a potential tool for mitigating this effect while also suggesting that obsessive passion may further intensify an employee's intention to quit.

Keywords: job passion, social undermining, turnover intention, moderation analysis.

JEL Classification: M1, M19.

1. Introduction

Previous studies have revealed the significance of interpersonal relations on employee behaviors and organizational outcomes. Individuals who maintain harmonious relationships with their co-workers, managers, and subordinates tend to experience greater job satisfaction and exhibit desired positive behaviors (Biron et al., 2006). Conversely, individuals facing relationship challenges are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction and engage in negative behaviors (Yean et al., 2022). Effective interpersonal relationships within organizations can synergistically enhance positive organizational outcomes, whereas problematic relationships may diminish individual and group contributions to the organization (Carmeli et al., 2009).

Although the positive side of interpersonal relations has been considerably researched with concepts such as social support (Parris, 2003) or cohesion (Beal et al., 2003), the negative sides, including social undermining, require further exploration. Studies indicate that social undermining which refers to deliberate acts of preventing positive workplace relationships, job success, or reputation, is more strongly related to negative work outcomes than positive ones (Duffy et al., 2002). Specifically, undermining actions have a negative impact on the victims' commitment and trigger their turnover intentions (Duffy, 1998).

In social undermining situations, people may react differently towards their job based on how much they have an intense liking or the significance of their job. Social Cognition Theory (Bandura, 1991) assumes that individuals use self-regulatory mechanisms to exercise self-control and evaluate the circumstances before responding to unjust situations. In the face of perceptions of undermining acts from supervisors or co-workers, employees appraise and influence the events that happened to them. They have the capacity to adapt to challenging situations either by adopting an action-oriented as a goal-driven or state-oriented as a stimuli-driven manner according to Action Control Theory (Kuhl, 1987). Therefore, people who highly internalize their job and see it personally im-

portant – a harmonious passion – may react differently than people who feel obliged to pursue it for the sake of their self-esteem – an obsessive passion (Valerand & Houlfort, 2003).

Although a large number of studies have been conducted to address the consequences of social undermining, little attention has been given to the variables that can reduce the impact of undermining – whether from supervisors or co-workers – on deviant behaviors such as turnover intention. While the link between social undermining and turnover intention is well-documented, few investigations have explored how different forms of job passion might influence this relationship. This study seeks to answer the research question: Can employees who experience social undermining from either supervisors or co-workers modify their inclination to leave their jobs depending on their passion for work? Specifically, we examined the interactive roles of harmonious and obsessive passion in moderating the relationship between social undermining and employee turnover intention.

We focused on civil defense workers because turnover in this high-stakes sector can have significant consequences. Employee turnover in civil defense, where specialized skills are crucial, can lead to operational inefficiencies and compromise organizational effectiveness (Hancock et al., 2013). In such a demanding and high-pressure environment, maintaining a stable workforce is essential (Batt et al., 2002). The unique challenges faced by civil defense workers – such as the risks associated with their roles and the impact of undermining behaviors – make them particularly relevant for this investigation (da Glória Bonelli et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding how job passion moderates the effect of social undermining on turnover intention in this context is vital for retaining skilled workers and ensuring the continued success of civil defense organizations. To explore these dynamics, we conducted a survey among employees from three leading companies in the civil defense sector and analyzed the data using SmartPLS and IBM SPSS.

The paper is structured as follows: It begins with a literature review and hypothesis development, including definitions of concepts, relevant theories, and the rationale behind the hypotheses. The methodology section details the sample, measurement tools, statistical procedures, and results. Finally, the conclusion and discussion section integrates the literature, explores practical implications, acknowledges limitations, and offers recommendations.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1. Social undermining

Social undermining refers to a type of relationship that includes negative emotions such as anger, dislike, and negative criticism of attitudes, behaviors, and efforts (Vinokur et al., 1996). It implies direct actions undermining social norms, such as rejecting someone outright, belittling their views, or deliberately speaking badly about them. In addition to such overt actions, social undermining can also be exhibited through covert means, such as hiding necessary information or not defending the person in case of a dispute (Quade et al., 2018). In order to distinguish social undermining from any negative behavior, first of all, the target must have a perception that the behavior is “deliberately” performed. Therefore, negligent or negative behaviors due to illness or coercion by others are not covered if the targets know the reasons. The second condition of undermining is that the behavior is insidious and wears out the target individual slowly and gradually. Undermining activities do not always have long-lasting or severe impacts, but the effects are somewhat expected to increase cumulatively over time. Therefore, physical acts such as murder, physical assault, or property damage are not covered, even if they are intentional. Last, even though the actor and the target may have different perspectives of intent, undermining conduct is intentional.

Vinokur and van Ryn (1993) stated the two primary sources of social undermining in the workplace are “supervisors” and “colleagues.” Overt actions like insulting employees and covert ones like withholding crucial information or treating someone silently are both instances of social undermining by supervisors. Social undermining by co-workers includes actions taken by colleagues to prevent the person from doing their job and building a positive reputation. It may be brought on by rivalry, interpersonal disputes, a dislike of teamwork, or other unfavorable workplace circumstances (Reh et al., 2018).

Studies on social undermining have shown that such behaviors can cause job stress in employees decrease in self-efficacy perceptions decline in organizational commitment, impairment in psychological well-being, an increase in intention to leave (Morita et al., 1993), loss in employee health and well-being depression and emotional exhaustion, reducing in trust in colleagues (Duffy et al., 2006), decrease in employee creativity, and lack of information sharing In addition, it has been determined that victims of social undermining in the workplace are prone to procrastination absenteeism, and being late (Deery et al., 2011). Social undermining behaviors also have been revealed to have negative

effects on employee creativity, knowledge sharing, and job performance (Ahmad et al., 2021; Duffy et al., 2002; Jung & Yoon, 2019; Khan et al., 2022; Nahum-Shani et al., 2014). A meta-analysis conducted by Bowling and Beehr (2006) showed that overt or covert forms of workplace maltreatment, including social undermining, were positively correlated with victims' intention to leave.

Although much research has been done to address the effects of social undermining, little has been done in the past to identify the factors that can lessen the influence of undermining on deviant behaviors, like turnover intention. Only a few studies have analyzed the effect of job passion on this association.

2.2. Job passion

Employee job passion is an attitude that is described as a person's consistent, emotionally upbeat, meaning-based state of well-being that results from repeated cognitive and affective assessments of varying work and organizational situations and produces stable, effective organizational behaviors (Zigarmi et al., 2009). Positive intentions encompass various desirable behaviors such as high productivity, good corporate citizenship, voluntary effort, and loyalty, all of which contribute constructively to the organization, including increased productivity, organizational citizenship, and commitment (Koys, 2001; Fischer & Smith, 2006; Lawrence & Robinson, 2007). Vallerand et al. (2003) categorized passion into two types, considering how the passionate activity is internalized into the person's identity: harmonious passion and obsessive passion. In the scope of harmonious passion, the activity one is passionate about is carried out in harmony with other activities in the individual's life. Participation in the activity is voluntary, and it is autonomously internalized. Harmoniously passionate individuals are more flexible and attentive to the activity, and they are more moderate and less defensive during it. In obsessive passion, there is an incompatibility and conflict between the passionate activity and other life outcomes. Controlled internalization occurs due to individual and interpersonal pressure, which makes the individual feel obligated to participate in the activity. The controlling nature of obsessive passion pushes the individual to be more rigid, persistent, egocentric, angry, and anxious. This type of commitment under pressure can prevent the individual from focusing on the activity, impairing the positive effects expected from passion and job satisfaction. It can even have a negative impact on work commitment.

According to the literature, both sub-dimensions are positively and significantly associated with affection, hard work, commitment to activity, life outcomes, well-being, goal orientations, and valuing activity (Vallerand et al., 2003). However, while harmonious passion is associated with positive life outcomes such as optimal performance mood (Philippe et al., 2009), positive affection, happiness, and quality communication among individuals, obsessive passion has been associated with activity personalization with negative affect, and adverse life outcomes (Mageau & Vallerand, 2007; Mageau et al., 2009; Stenseng, 2008).

2.3. The relations between social undermining and employee turnover intention

This study employs the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to explain the negative effects of aggressive behavior on employees (Valle et al., 2019). The theory proposes that partners in a social exchange expect equality and destructive behaviors can arise when one partner fails to meet the other's expectations (Jung & Yoon, 2019). Positive social exchange, however, can increase employees' inclination to stay with an organization (Smyth & Zimba, 2019), while poor interpersonal relationships among supervisors, employees, and co-workers can contribute to high turnover rates (Avanzi et al., 2014).

A variety of negative outcomes have been linked to being the focus of mistreatment, but the employee's desire to quit may be the most prevalent. Many studies have demonstrated that employees who endure workplace mistreatment indicate increased withdrawal and intention to leave (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Tepper, 2000). According to Duffy (1998), undermining behaviors might have a direct effect on commitment and turnover intentions and an indirect effect on these two outcomes due to their impact on job satisfaction (Duffy, 1998). Greenbaum et al. (2015) found that when employees have high expectations for interpersonal justice, the socially undermining behavior of the supervisor increases the intention to leave the job even more.

Conservation of resources (COR) theory also explains the victims' tendency to avoid the source of stress by distancing themselves from it or adopting a passive coping strategy to conserve their limited resources and alleviate their psychological distress (Hobfoll, 1989). The fact that target employees of social undermining often hide their exposure or do not retaliate can be attributed to the dependence of employees on their supervisors, colleagues, and customers for the resources they desire, such as sustainable employment and advancement oppor-

tunities (Duffy et al., 2012). Bowling and Beehr (2006) conducted a meta-analysis that demonstrated a positive correlation between workplace maltreatment, including social undermining, and the victim's intention to leave. Mula-phong's (2023) study further supports this finding by revealing that social undermining can lead to poor job performance and an increased intention to leave among victims. The experience of social undermining can also erode an individual's perception of organizational and co-worker support (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996) and damage their perception of organizational justice (Cho & Sai, 2012). Consequently, these factors may negatively affect a victim's level of trust and cooperation, leading to behaviors such as absenteeism and tardiness and, ultimately, a decision to leave the organization (Hanisch & Hulin, 1991; Schneider et al., 1997).

Abusive behaviors from supervisors and co-workers, such as rudeness, giving silent treatment, undermining, and explosive outbursts, can harm employee well-being and, in turn, increase turnover intentions (Yang & Xu, 2024). Experiencing these undermining behaviors can lower individual productivity, ultimately contributing to a greater likelihood of employees leaving the organization. Moreover, supervisor-induced social undermining can lead to service sabotage, further escalating turnover intentions (Schwepker & Dimitriou, 2023). Therefore, in line with this theoretical framework, it is expected in this study that:

H1a: Supervisor social undermining has a positive impact on turnover intention.

H1b: Co-worker social undermining has a positive impact on turnover intention.

2.4. The influence of job passion on the association between social undermining and turnover intention

Passion is thought to be the inherent factor that sustains and improves people's interest in and devotion toward their profession, in contrast to external rewards or social recognition, and ultimately increases their willingness to stay in the company (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004). Previous studies have demonstrated that an employee's attitude and behavior can significantly impact their job passion (Ho et al., 2018). According to the turnover model, individuals quit their positions for various reasons. However, they are all somewhat influenced by external factors, including the organization's compensation structure, the demands of the job, and relationships with co-workers (Steel, 2002).

The self-determination theory proposes that an individual's level of internalization of the activity determines how much external factors influence them. External factors can impact both harmonic and obsessive passion, but each to a different extent (Forest et al., 2011). Positive emotions and personal cognition combine to create harmonious passion. Fewer external circumstances impact this enthusiasm (Vallerand et al., 2007). Therefore, workers with harmonious passions can have more dominance over how they act and behave at work. According to Firth et al. (2004), an employee's intention to leave their job can be lessened if they exercise self-control in their work. Furthermore, Jiang et al. (2017) claimed that harmonious passion is associated with a lower likelihood of employee turnover, while on the other hand, obsessive passion is associated with a higher likelihood of employee turnover. Employees who have obsessive passion mostly believe that their working conditions are controlled by external factors (Vallerand et al., 2003). These workers may feel overstressed when performing a particular task to lessen the external influence that would lead them to quit. According to the literature, harmonious passion actively predicts an employee's job satisfaction and prevents job burnout. However, obsessive passion will result in more job conflicts and burnout among employees, which have the potential to greatly impact employee turnover intention (Vallerand et al., 2010). According to Hu et al. (2024), employees with harmonious passion are less likely to quit their jobs as their fundamental needs are fulfilled. Furthermore, research has shown that harmonious passion affects the intention to stay, with job satisfaction acting as a mediator in this connection (Alexand & Sandroto, 2023). Passion may also influence commitment through social interactions, amplifying commitment's detrimental effect on turnover intentions (Lin & Chen, 2016).

As clarified above, employees' turnover intention is influenced by external factors, including the organization's compensation structure, the demands of the job, and relationships with co-workers. In contrast, job passion depends on the effect of external factors on the internalization of work activities. Consequently, job passion might change the amount of effect of social undermining on turnover intention or even avoid it. Based on this approach, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2a₁: Harmonious job passion has a moderating role in the effect of supervisor social undermining on turnover intention.

Namely, when harmonious job passion is high, the positive relationship between supervisor social undermining and turnover intention will be weaker. Conversely, when harmonious job passion is low, the positive relationship between supervisor social undermining and turnover intention will be stronger.

H2a₂: Obsessive job passion has a moderating role in the effect of supervisor social undermining on turnover intention.

Namely, when obsessive job passion is high, the positive relationship between supervisor social undermining and turnover intention will be stronger. Conversely, when obsessive job passion is low, the positive relationship between supervisor social undermining and turnover intention will be weaker.

H2b₁: Harmonious job passion has a moderating role in the effect of co-worker social undermining on turnover intention.

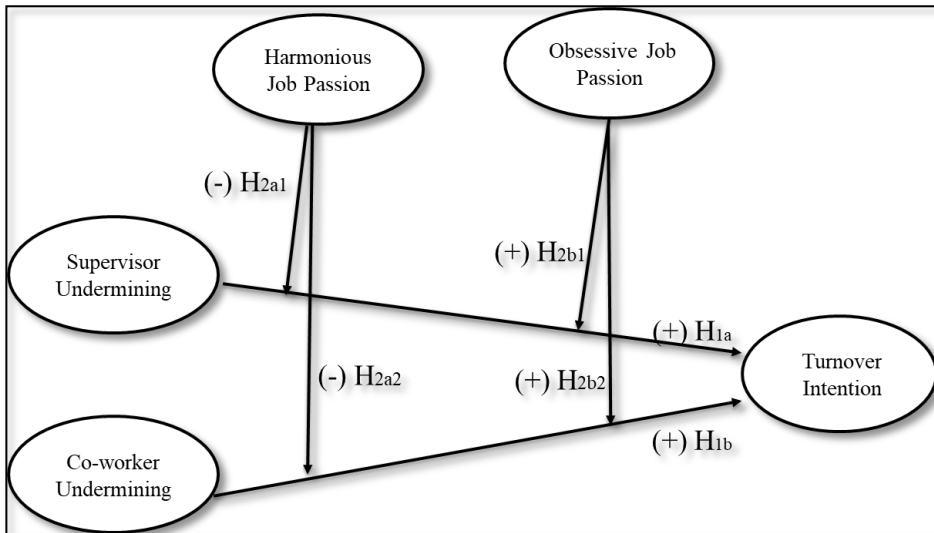
Namely, when harmonious job passion is high, the positive relationship between co-worker social undermining and turnover intention will be weaker. Conversely, when harmonious job passion is low, the positive relationship between co-worker social undermining and turnover intention will be stronger.

H2b₂: Obsessive job passion has a moderating role in the effect of co-worker social undermining on turnover intention.

Namely, when obsessive job passion is high, the positive relationship between co-worker social undermining and turnover intention will be stronger. Conversely, when obsessive job passion is low, the positive relationship between co-worker social undermining and turnover intention will be weaker.

Based on the insights gained from the literature review, the research model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research model



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection procedure

The data for the study were collected between June 2022 and August 2022. 1,200 questionnaires were distributed to individuals working in the field of civil defense in Turkey, selected through a random sampling method, and 412 responses were received. However, due to 11 incomplete data points, the analysis was conducted with 401 valid responses. The demographic characteristics of the participants show that the majority were male (67.6%), while female participants constituted 32.4%. Most participants held a university degree (52.4%), and the age range was predominantly between 20 and 45. Data collection was carried out through both face-to-face surveys and online questionnaires. The three participating companies are leading organizations in the Turkish civil defense sector, with the majority of participants having 7-12 years of work experience. The average turnover rate in these companies is 25%, which is significant in assessing employees' turnover intentions.

The study aimed to explore the relationship between turnover intention and factors such as tenure in the organization and the type of employment contract. To ensure ethical standards, no personally identifiable information was collected to protect participant confidentiality. Additionally, before data collection, each company's human resources department was contacted, and the survey questions were reviewed and approved by the companies' legal teams to ensure compliance. This process ensured that the research adhered to both ethical guidelines and legal requirements.

Although participants were selected through a random sampling method, the study is limited to individuals working in the field of civil defense in Turkey, which may not fully represent other sectors or countries. This limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. In addition, industry-specific Focus may limit the applicability of the findings to other industries, where turnover intentions and job satisfaction factors could vary significantly.

3.2. Measurement instruments

Our study used SmartPLS 4 and IBM SPSS for data analysis, encompassing validity, reliability, and bootstrapping analyses. SmartPLS 4 was chosen for its advanced capabilities and superior performance compared to other software. Its enhanced features effectively handle complex models and large datasets, making

it particularly valuable for analyzing structural relationships and interactions. Scales were confirmed for the Turkish language through confirmatory factor analysis. We employed three scales, each using a 5-point Likert-type structure. The turnover intention scale, a one-factor scale containing four items, was developed by Thatcher et al. (2002). The passion scale, a two-factor scale comprising twelve items, was created by Vallerand et al. (2003). The social undermining scale, a two-factor scale with twenty-six items, was developed by Duffy et al. (2002). All scales and items are listed in the Appendix at the end of this article.

4. Findings

In our study, the construct validity of the scales adapted to the Turkish backdrop was rigorously tested (Table 1).

Table 1. Results of scale validity, reliability, and model fit

Variables		CA	rho-A	CR	AVE	Highest VIF	SRMR	d-ULS	d_G	NFI
Social undermining	Supervisor	.912	.916	.903	.621	2.981	.005	1.301 (p > 0.05)	2.705 (p > 0.05)	.979
	Co-worker	.914	.851	.899	.589	2.915				
Turnover intention		.879	.891	.811	.728	2.815				
Job passion	Harmonious passion	.851	.912	.805	.531	3.456				
	Obsessive Passion	.891	.879	.809	.579	2.791				

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

This table includes model fit indexes such as SRMR, d-ULS, d_G, and NFI, which comprehensively evaluate the scales' structural validity. These model fit values indicate the degree to which the adapted scales align with the expected theoretical constructs, ensuring their appropriateness for use in the Turkish context.

Table 1 presents the validity, reliability, and model fit statistics after removing specific items from the social undermining, job passion, and turnover intention scales. Key metrics such as Cronbach's alpha ($CA \geq 0.70$), rho-A ($\rho_A \geq 0.70$) Composite reliability ($CR \geq 0.70$), Average variance extracted ($AVE \geq 0.50$), and Variance inflation factor ($VIF < 5$) are included to assess the constructs' reliability and validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additionally, model fit indexes such as the standardized root mean square residual ($SRMR < 0.08$) (Chen, 2007), d-ULS, d G ($p > 0.05$) (Hair et al., 2017), and normed fit index ($NFI \geq 0.90$) (Ringle et al., 2015) are reported to evaluate overall model fit.

After the item reduction, both social undermining and job passion scales demonstrate strong internal consistency. Specifically, the social undermining scale maintains high CA values for supervisor and co-worker subdimensions (Supervisor: .912; Co-worker: .914), indicating robust reliability. Likewise, the turnover intention and job passion subscales show acceptable reliability (harmonious passion: .851; obsessive passion: .891) after the item reductions.

The AVE values provide evidence of satisfactory convergent validity, with most constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of .50. The AVE for turnover intention (.728) demonstrates robust convergent validity, indicating that this construct is well-represented by its items even after the item removals. The AVE for obsessive passion (.579) is slightly lower but still within acceptable bounds.

The highest VIF values remain within acceptable limits, although some variables, such as job passion (harmonious passion: 3.456), exhibit slightly elevated VIF values, suggesting moderate multicollinearity. However, these values do not exceed critical thresholds that would significantly distort the model's estimations.

The SRMR value of .005 reflects excellent model fit, as it is significantly below the commonly accepted threshold of .08, indicating minimal discrepancy between the model and the observed data after item removal. Similarly, the discrepancy indexes, d-ULS (1.301) and d_G (2.705), remain within acceptable ranges, further verifying the model's adequacy.

Finally, the NFI value of .979, which exceeds the .90 benchmark, confirms a good fit for the revised model. This suggests that removing items did not compromise the overall model fit and that the model's structural integrity has been preserved (Table 1).

The discriminant validity among factors was analyzed by comparing the correlation values between factors and the square root of each factor's average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The findings showed that the AVE values exceeded the correlation values, indicating a clear distinction between variables. Furthermore, significant relationships were observed between the factors when examining their associations (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of discriminant validity analysis

Variables	$\sqrt{AVE}$	SU	CU	TI	HP	OP
Supervisor undermining (SU)	.789	1	.591**	.687**	-.552**	.571**
Co-worker undermining (CU)	.741		1	.691**	-.599**	.487**
Turnover intention (TI)	.853			1	-.601**	.402**
Harmonious passion (HP)	.728				1	.496**
Obsessive passion (OP)	.760					1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

To examine the hypotheses regarding the influence of job passion on the relationship between social undermining and turnover intention, the explanatory power between variables (R^2), the effect size (f^2), and estimation coefficient (Q^2) values were analyzed to understand the relationship (Table 3) further. When the results of the analyses were examined, it was seen that R^2 values explained 65.4% of the variance in turnover intention. The remaining variance was attributed to other variables. The f^2 results indicated that supervisor undermining had a strong and consistent impact on turnover intention, while co-worker undermining had a weak and consistent impact. Furthermore, job passion explained 48.8% of the variance in turnover intention, with both harmonious and obsessive passion exerting a weak effect. Moreover, the study examined the Q^2 of the endogenous variables in the model, revealing that turnover intention and social undermining were predictive factors (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3. Impact coefficient values

Variables	R^2	f^2		Q^2
		Turnover intention	Job passion	
Social undermining	.654			.405
Supervisor undermining		.402	.004	
Co-worker undermining		.031	.001	
Job passion	.488			.007
Harmonious passion		-.029		.005
Obsessive passion		.031		.014

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Based on the results in Table 4, all hypotheses are supported with significant moderation effects from harmonious passion and obsessive passion in the relationship between supervisor and co-worker undermining and turnover intention.

First, the direct effects of undermining on turnover intention are confirmed. H1a, which posits that supervisor undermining positively affects turnover intention, is supported ($\beta = .397$, $p = .002$). This result indicates that higher levels of supervisor undermining significantly increase employees' intention to leave the organization. Similarly, H1b, suggesting that co-worker undermining also positively influences turnover intention, is corroborated by the data ($\beta = .311$, $p = .001$), showing that co-worker undermining is a significant predictor of turnover intention.

Regarding the moderation effects, H2a₁ proposes that harmonious passion moderates the relationship between supervisor undermining and turnover intention. The results confirm this hypothesis with a significant negative interaction effect ($\beta = -.323$, $p = .000$). This suggests that harmonious passion weakens the

impact of supervisor undermining on turnover intention, meaning that employees with higher levels of harmonious passion are less affected by supervisor undermining and are less likely to consider leaving the organization.

H2a₂, which posits that obsessive passion moderates the relationship between supervisor undermining and turnover intention, is also supported ($\beta = .501$, $p = .000$). Unlike harmonious passion, obsessive passion strengthens the positive relationship between supervisor undermining and turnover intention. Employees with high levels of obsessive passion are more likely to feel the negative impact of supervisor undermining, leading to a stronger desire to leave.

Similarly, H2b₁ suggests that harmonious passion moderates the relationship between co-worker undermining and turnover intention. The data ($\beta = -.122$, $p = .000$) confirm this, indicating that harmonious passion weakens the effect of co-worker undermining on turnover intention. Employees with harmonious passion are less likely to experience increased turnover intentions due to co-worker undermining.

Finally, H2b₂, which posits that obsessive passion moderates the relationship between co-worker undermining and turnover intention, is supported ($\beta = .429$, $p = .007$). The results show that obsessive passion amplifies the effect of co-worker undermining on turnover intention, making employees with high obsessive passion more susceptible to the negative effects of co-worker undermining, thereby increasing their desire to leave (Table 4).

Table 4. Research model coefficients

Hypotheses	β	Standard deviation	T Statistics	P
Social undermining (supervisor undermining) -> turnover intention	.397	.113	2.899	.002
Social undermining (co-worker undermining) -> turnover intention	.311	.128	2.18	.001
Harmonious passion x supervisor undermining -> turnover intention	-.323	.119	2.555	.000
Obsessive passion x supervisor undermining -> turnover intention	.501	.023	5.811	.000
Harmonious passion x co-worker undermining -> turnover intention	-.122	.081	1.027	.000
Obsessive passion x co-worker undermining -> turnover intention	.429	0.037	4.461	.007

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

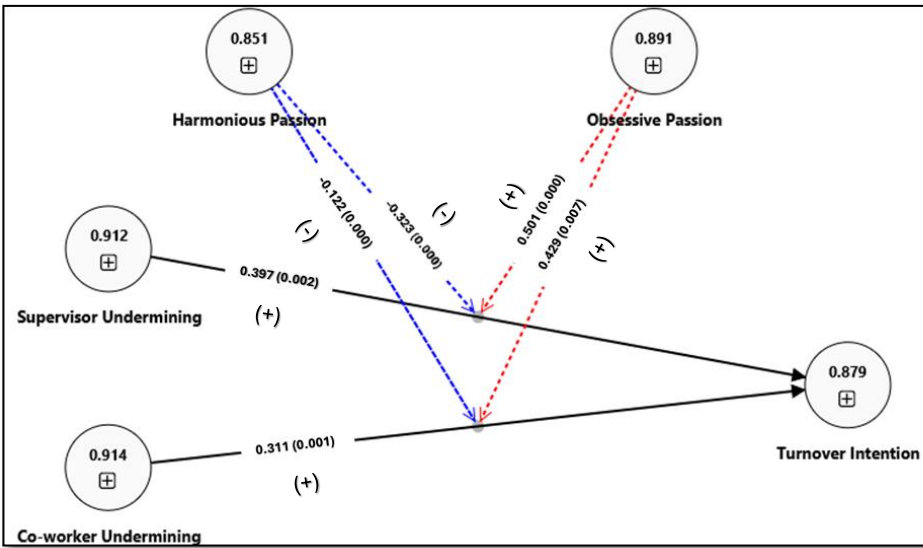
Figure 2 presents the structural equation model analysis findings, encompassing all of these results. Figure 3 indicates that employees with harmonious passion tend to have a lower intention to leave the organization in the face of supervisor undermining. The moderation effect between harmonious passion and supervisor undermining is negative ($\beta = -0.323$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that employees with high harmonious passion are less likely to develop turnover intentions despite negative behaviors from their supervisors. Similarly, harmonious

passion also decreases turnover intentions when employees face co-worker undermining ($\beta = -0.122, p < 0.001$), indicating that these employees are more resilient to negative co-worker actions.

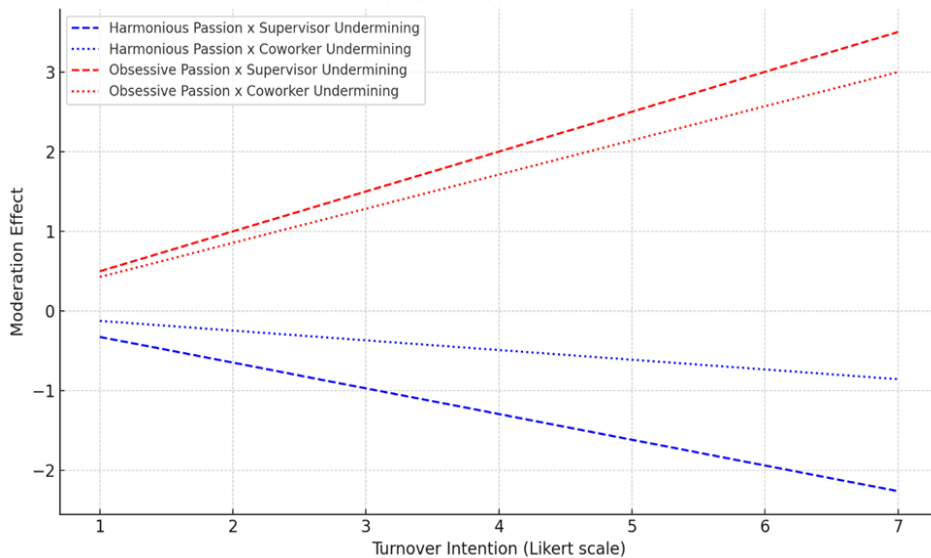
However, employees with obsessive passion exhibit an increased intention to leave the organization when faced with supervisor undermining. The moderation effect between obsessive passion and supervisor undermining is positive and strong ($\beta = 0.501, p < 0.001$), showing that employees with high obsessive passion are significantly more likely to consider leaving the organization when subjected to negative behaviors from their supervisors. Likewise, obsessive passion increases turnover intentions when employees face co-worker undermining ($\beta = 0.429, p < 0.001$), indicating that negative behaviors from co-workers also strongly impact employees with obsessive passion.

These findings suggest that employees with harmonious passion are more resilient to workplace adversities. In contrast, those with obsessive passion are more vulnerable to negative experiences, such as undermining from both supervisors and co-workers.

Figure 2. Results of the research model



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Figure 3. Results of moderation analysis

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights for organizations, particularly in high-pressure sectors like civil defense, where turnover can have serious operational consequences. Confirming H1a and H1b aligns with existing literature, emphasizing the effects of social undermining on employees' turnover intention. Both supervisor and co-worker undermining significantly contribute to employees' intentions to leave, reinforcing previous studies showing that toxic behaviors from either source can create a negative work environment. Supervisor undermining, in particular, was found to have a strong positive relationship with turnover intention, supporting prior research highlighting the critical role supervisors play in shaping employee behavior and organizational commitment. Co-worker undermining similarly drives turnover intention by creating stressful peer relationships, ultimately leading to dissatisfaction and a desire to quit.

This study extends existing research by exploring the moderating role of harmonious and obsessive job passion in the relationship between social undermining and turnover intention. One of the most significant practical implications of these findings is the potential for harmonious passion for acting as a protective factor against the negative impact of undermining behaviors. Employees

with harmonious passion, characterized by an intrinsic love for their work and a balanced engagement, are less likely to leave even when faced with undermining from supervisors or co-workers. This is consistent with self-determination theory, which posits that individuals who experience harmonious passion derive satisfaction and meaning from their work, allowing them to maintain a positive outlook despite adverse circumstances. The data suggest that harmonious passion effectively buffers employees from the detrimental effects of supervisor and co-worker undermining, reducing their turnover intention.

The moderation effect of harmonious passion is significant in the context of organizational retention strategies. Managers can encourage harmonious passion by promoting a work environment that satisfies employees' basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This could include offering opportunities for skill development, recognizing employee achievements, and fostering positive interpersonal relationships. By cultivating an atmosphere where employees feel intrinsically motivated and fulfilled, organizations can reduce the likelihood of turnover, even in the face of undermining behaviors.

Conversely, obsessive passion, characterized by a rigid and externally driven attachment to work, exacerbates the relationship between social undermining and turnover intention. Employees with high levels of obsessive passion are more likely to view undermining behaviors as personal attacks, which increases their stress levels and intensifies their desire to leave. This finding aligns with the dualistic model of passion, which suggests that obsessive passion can lead to maladaptive outcomes when employees face challenges or conflicts at work. The study reveals that obsessive passion strengthens the relationship between supervisor and co-worker, undermining and turnover intention, underscoring the vulnerability of obsessively passionate employees to workplace conflict and interpersonal challenges.

For organizations, this finding suggests that it is not enough to simply promote passion in the workplace; the type of passion matters. Encouraging obsessive passion, where employees feel compelled to work out of a sense of obligation or external pressure, can backfire, particularly in environments where social undermining is present. Managers should be cautious about fostering a culture of over-commitment or workaholism, as this can lead to increased turnover among obsessively passionate employees who are less resilient to negative social interactions. Instead, organizations should promote a healthy work-life balance and encourage employees to pursue their work with a sense of fulfillment and intrinsic motivation rather than external compulsion.

Organizations need to actively manage both the sources of social undermining and the type of job passion they promote. In high-stakes industries, where

turnover can disrupt operations and reduce overall effectiveness, fostering harmonious passion can be a key strategy for retaining employees. At the same time, efforts should be made to identify and prevent undermining behaviors, whether supervisors or co-workers, as these behaviors significantly contribute to employees' desire to quit.

This study provides actionable insights for organizations looking to reduce turnover and improve employee retention. By promoting harmonious passion and preventing social undermining, companies can create a work environment that supports employee well-being and job satisfaction, ultimately leading to lower turnover rates. The findings suggest that organizations should adopt a dual approach: focus on fostering positive, intrinsic engagement with work while simultaneously addressing the toxic behaviors that can undermine employee morale and drive turnover.

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to explore the moderating role of job passion – both harmonious and obsessive – in the relationship between social undermining and employee turnover intention. The findings indicate that harmonious passion mitigates the negative effects of social undermining, reducing turnover intention, while obsessive passion amplifies these effects. First, H1a and H1b are confirmed and align with previous research, emphasizing the detrimental effects of social undermining in the workplace. The positive relationship between supervisor undermining and turnover intention supports existing literature, which highlights those negative behaviors from supervisors, such as undermining, directly influence employees' desire to quit. Similarly, co-worker undermining also significantly contributes to turnover intentions, corroborating findings that toxic peer relationships at work lead to increased stress and dissatisfaction, ultimately pushing employees toward exit decisions.

Beyond these direct effects, the study advances understanding by revealing the moderating roles of harmonious passion and obsessive passion in shaping the relationship between social undermining and turnover intention. The results show that harmonious passion is a buffer against the negative impact of undermining, both from supervisors and co-workers. This is consistent with research suggesting that harmonious passion, characterized by a balanced and intrinsic love for work, helps individuals maintain a more positive outlook even in adverse conditions. The significant negative moderation of harmonious passion on the relationship between supervisor undermining and turnover intention indi-

cates that employees with higher levels of harmonious passion are less likely to respond to supervisor undermining with turnover intentions. A similar moderating effect was observed for co-worker undermining, suggesting that harmonious passion helps employees manage the negative effects of co-worker hostility, reducing their likelihood of leaving the organization.

However, obsessive passion exacerbates the relationship between social undermining and turnover intention, strengthening the negative impact of undermining behaviors. The significant positive interaction between obsessive passion and supervisor undermining indicates that employees with high obsessive passion are more likely to respond to supervisor undermining with a heightened desire to leave. This finding aligns with the dualistic model of passion, which posits that obsessive passion, driven by external pressures and a rigid attachment to work, can lead to maladaptive outcomes when individuals face challenges at work. Likewise, obsessive passion amplifies the effect of co-worker undermining on turnover intention, further highlighting that employees with obsessive tendencies are particularly vulnerable to interpersonal conflict in the workplace.

The results provide important insights for theory and practice, extending the current literature on social undermining and turnover intention by introducing job passion as a key moderating factor.

Despite the valuable contributions of this research, several limitations exist. First, the study was conducted with civil defense employees in Turkey, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or sectoral contexts. Factors such as the local economic environment, sector-specific norms, and workplace dynamics may differ across regions, potentially influencing turnover intention and the impact of social undermining. Turkey's high power-distance culture might also affect employees' willingness to express dissatisfaction, which could influence their responses to the self-report measures used in this study. Future research could address this limitation by replicating the study in different cultural settings or sectors. Another limitation is the study's cross-sectional design, which prevents us from establishing causality between variables. Longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into the causal relationships between social undermining, job passion, and turnover intention. Furthermore, this study relied solely on quantitative methods, which limits the depth of understanding that could be gained from qualitative data. Future research could incorporate interviews or focus groups to explore the underlying mechanisms driving the relationship between social undermining and turnover intention.

This study underscores the importance of managing social undermining in the workplace and fostering harmonious passion among employees. Organizations can reduce turnover and enhance overall performance by creating supportive environ-

ments that nurture intrinsic motivation and well-being. Further research should continue to explore the complex interplay between social undermining, job passion, and turnover intention across diverse settings.

Author contributions

Burcu Tosun – 25% (research concept and design, writing the article, critical revision of the article).

Gamze Güner Kibaroglu – 25% (research concept and design, collection and/or assembly of data, data analysis and interpretation).

Hamdullah Nejat Basım – 25% (research concept and design, data analysis and interpretation, writing the article).

Fatih Çetin – 25% (writing the article).

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Appendix

Table 5. Scales and items

Scale	Dimension	Items
1	2	3
Turnover intention scale (Thatcher et al., 2002)		I intend to quit.
		I am thinking about quitting.
		I have many alternative job opportunities including some that are different from what I do now.
		I can find another job doing exactly what I am doing now.
Passion scale (Vallerand et al., 2003)	Harmonious passion	This activity is in harmony with the other activities in my life.
		The new things I discovered with this activity allowed me to appreciate it even more.
		This activity reflects the qualities I like about myself.
		This activity allows me to live a variety of experiences.
		My activity is well integrated into my life.
		My activity is in harmony with other things that are part of me.
	Obsessive passion	I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my activity.
		I have almost an obsessive feeling about this activity.
		This activity is the only thing that really turns me on.
		If I could, I would only do my activity.
		This activity is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it.
		I have the impression that my activity controls me.

Table 5 cont.

1	2	3
Social undermining scale (Duffy et al., 2002)	Supervisor undermining	Hurt your feelings?
		Put you down when you questioned work procedures?
		Undermined your effort to be successful on the job?
		Let you know they did not like you or something about you?
		Talked bad about you behind your back?
		Insulted you?
		Belittled you or your ideas?
		Spread rumors about you?
		Made you feel incompetent?
		Delayed work to make you look bad or slow you down?
		Talked down to you?
		Gave you the silent treatment?
		Did not defend you when people spoke poorly of you?
	Co-worker undermining	Insulted you?
		Gave you the silent treatment?
		Spread rumors about you?
		Delayed work to make you look bad or slow you down?
		Belittled you or your ideas?
		Hurt your feelings?
		Talked bad about you behind your back?
		Criticized the way you handled things on the job in a way that was not helpful.
		Did not give as much help as they promised?
		Gave you incorrect or misleading information about the job?
		Competed with you for status and recognition?
		Let you know they did not like you or something about you?
		Did not defend you when people spoke poorly of you?

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