

Employees with the Wind at Their Back: The Effect of Organizational Support on Performance in Aviation

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Abstract

In the aviation industry, where safety and operational efficiency are paramount, maintaining high employee performance is essential. This study examines the relationship between perceived organizational support and individual performance among aviation sector employees, including flight crews, ground services, and technical staff. Data were collected from 429 participants employed at various airports and airline companies using two validated, single-dimensional instruments: the “Perceived Organizational Support Scale” and the “Employee Performance Scale.” To test the hypothesized relationships, a structural regression model — a form of structural equation modelling (SEM) that integrates confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis — was applied using AMOS software. The results of the SEM analysis indicated that perceived organizational support has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. While the study did not include additional mediating variables such as motivation or job satisfaction, the statistical findings highlight the predictive power of organizational support on performance outcomes. These results offer strategic implications for HR professionals, operations planners, and senior management, underlining the importance of organizational support as a key driver of performance in the high-risk and dynamic aviation industry.

1. Introduction

Perceived organizational support, one of the concepts frequently discussed in cognitive research, emerges through the way employees perceive and interpret people, events, and institutional practices around them. This perception does not occur at the same level for all employees; individuals' cognitive frameworks for organizational events may differ. While practices implemented in the aviation sector may be perceived as supportive by a group of employees, other employees may evaluate the same practices as neutral or negative (Bağdoğan, 2018). Therefore, before implementing organizational support practices, clearly sharing the implementation goals and expectations with employees will ensure that the perception is shaped positively in a broader context.

The analysis of relationship dynamics within an organization is based on employee support theory and the social exchange theory that underlies it. The perceived organizational support approach developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) explains employees' perceptions of whether they are valued by the organization. This perception directly affects employees' emotional ties to the organization, their motivation, and their positive or negative attitudes toward the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Tokgöz, 2011).

In a field that involves high risk, high responsibility, and intense regulation, such as the aviation sector, organizational support elements such as considering employees' creative ideas and suggestions, fair management practices, career development opportunities, and providing material and moral support contribute to the formation of a sense of trust and belonging among employees. Such supportive environments strengthen the sense of job security and create indirect but significant effects on critical performance indicators such as flight safety, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Yılmaz & Görmüş, 2012).

Eisenberger et al. (1986) defined perceived organizational support as an important element indicating the quality of the relationship between the organization and employees. The existence of organizational support is considered as a source that increases individual happiness, commitment to work and performance (Turunç & Çelik, 2010). Accordingly, the assumption that corporate responsibility regarding organizational support will have an effect on increasing employee performance constitutes the main research question of this study.

It is of great importance for organizations operating in the aviation sector to strategically structure their relationships with their employees in order to adapt to dynamic conditions and changing global standards. Due to the nature of this sector, excellence is targeted in areas such as flight safety, on-time service and high customer satisfaction. The commitment of all

employees, from flight crews to ground services personnel, to the organization, their performance and their capacity to cope with stress play a decisive role in achieving these goals (Öztürk, 2023; Ömür, 2023).

In this context, increasing perceived organizational support creates a positive effect on performance by increasing employee commitment and motivation. The fact that employees are seen as a part of the organization, feel they belong to the organization and do not intend to leave is a critical success factor in terms of the operational quality of aviation services and corporate sustainability. Current studies in the literature also show that perceived organizational support has a direct impact on employees' job performance, job satisfaction, and work commitment. This support helps individuals feel valued and secure, allowing them to perform better (Öztürk, 2024).

In this study, the subject of perceived organizational support is first addressed conceptually, then the concept of job performance is examined. In the method section, the research model, sample, scales used, and analysis techniques are explained; finally, in the findings section, the data obtained are analyzed and interpreted, and the results are discussed.

2. Relationships Between Concepts

2.1. Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses

In this section, the conceptual framework of the study will be addressed. The variables will be explained with a focus on the aviation industry context.

2.1.1. Perceived Organizational Support in Aviation

Perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli from their environment (Erdoğan, 1996). Perception is individual; individuals' lifestyles, cultural backgrounds, belief systems, and personal characteristics shape this process. Since the concept of "perceived" reflects an individual's subjective interpretation rather than an objective reality, an organizational practice may be evaluated positively by one employee, while the same practice may be perceived neutrally or negatively by another employee. In this context, perceived organizational support (PES) represents an individual's assessment of the extent to which the organization values the well-being and contributions of its employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

The question of why employees need organizational support is essentially related to the individual's desire to develop self-confidence and establish social belonging. Especially in areas with high risk and high stress, such as the aviation sector, it is of great importance for individuals to feel organizational belonging, to be emotionally supported, and to feel that their work is meaningful. From the perspective of social identity theory, employees' perception of themselves as valuable members of an organizational structure plays a critical role in both their individual and professional development (Hutchison, 1997).

Perceived organizational support refers to the organization's interest in employees' well-being and the individual's perception of whether their contributions are appreciated (Aydoğmuş & Er, 2023, p. 219). Theoretically, when AÖ is high, employees are more committed to organizational goals, exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, and are more effective in in-role/out-of-role work behaviors (Eisenberger et al., 1997).

In the context of the aviation sector, the impact of AÖ on employee behavior is even more critical. Employees in different positions, such as flight crews, ground handling personnel, air traffic controllers, and maintenance technicians, perform tasks that require a high level of coordination and attention. Therefore, employees' perception of organizational support is vital in reducing operational errors, coping with stress, and providing safe service. Literature shows that employees are more committed, less burnt out, and more productive when they feel supported by the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

It has long been known that there is a positive relationship between affective commitment and organizational support (Buchanan, 1974). Factors that increase AÖD include fair compensation, broadening job descriptions (job enlargement), and qualitatively enriching areas of responsibility (job enrichment). In shift-based and fast-paced industries such as the aviation industry, such practices strengthen employees' perception of AÖD by supporting role clarity and job motivation.

In addition, improving working conditions directly affects employees' perceived support, especially by reducing stress factors such as flight fatigue, intense time pressure, and sudden operational changes. Stress resulting from the imbalance between employees' competencies and job requirements reduces the level of AÖD and can lead to burnout. In contrast, in work environments where stress is systematically managed and psychological safety is provided, the perception of organizational support increases (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The attitude of managers is also a determining factor in the perception of AÖD. Since managers are perceived as representatives of the organization, the quality of the relationship with the manager can affect the employees' attitudes towards the entire organization. Trust-based relationships established with managers contribute to employees feeling valued and establishing an emotional bond with the organization. On the contrary, negative factors such as injustice or lack of communication weaken AÖD and cause employees to distance themselves from the organization (Shore & Shore, 1995; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The perception of organizational support is not limited to the psychological well-being of employees, but also directly affects various work outcomes such as absenteeism, tardiness, intention to leave the job, and non-role behaviors (Üren, 2012; Giray & Şahin, 2012). In sectors with low tolerance for error, such as the aviation sector, high PST is seen as a critical preventive factor for reducing such behaviors.

However, various studies have also shown that demographic characteristics of employees, such as age, gender, and level of education, have a limited effect on PST perception (Öztürk, & Güney, 2022; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 701). Instead, it is emphasized that institutional factors such as organizational climate, leadership style, reward systems, and communication policies are more decisive.

2.1.2. Employee Performance in Aviation

Performance refers to the level at which an individual or a group achieves set goals and standards in an organizational context (Yılmaz & Karahan, 2010, p. 127). More clearly, performance is both a quantitative and qualitative indicator of how, to what extent, and at what efficiency level an employee performs the activities expected of him/her within the framework of his/her job description (Çöl, 2008, p. 39). This process is directly related to the individual's personal values,

attitudes, competencies, and motivation level (Yazıcıoğlu, 2010, p. 246).

According to Argon and Eren (2004), employee performance is a functional indicator that reveals the difference between the work that needs to be done and what is done. Tutar and Altınöz (2010) define performance as a multidimensional concept that measures the effectiveness of an individual or an organization in achieving set goals. In this context, job performance; It is a holistic assessment of parameters such as individual effort, contribution to organizational goals and time-cost effectiveness (Bingöl, 2003: 273)

In industries with a high safety culture and extremely low error tolerance, such as the aviation sector, employee performance stands out as a determinant not only of productivity but also of critical outputs such as flight safety, operational continuity and passenger satisfaction. From cabin crew to pilots, from air traffic controllers to maintenance technicians, all positions perform tasks that require high attention, discipline and teamwork. Therefore, disruption of individual performance can lead to chain operational risks.

As revealed in the study of Challis et al. (2002), there is a significant relationship between individual employee performance and corporate output. In sectors with high risk and intense regulation such as aviation, performance management directly affects not only the effectiveness of the individual but also the security of the system. In this respect, the morale and motivation levels of employees are one of the basic determinants for them to exhibit high performance.

In environments where motivation is high, employees are more committed to their jobs, their job satisfaction increases, and they become more open to taking on responsibility. In order to increase motivation, it is not enough for businesses to offer their employees only financial rewards; elements such as fair promotion systems, open communication, positive workplace relations, and recognition of individual contributions also play a critical role (Uygur, 2007: 75).

In the aviation industry, job performance is not limited to the performance of specific tasks; it also includes a holistic evaluation of decision-making speed, stress coping skills, multitasking, and behaviors exhibited in times of crisis. In particular, the high performance of personnel involved in ensuring flight safety is indispensable for the sustainability of the sector.

Uysal (2024) states that employee performance directly affects organizational efficiency. In this context, it is clear that aviation businesses should not limit their human resources management policies to technical training alone, but should create a supportive organizational climate that is sensitive to the psychological needs of employees.

While Cemaloğlu (2007) emphasizes that employee performance is the basis of organizational success, Çöl (2008) also states that an increase in individual performance directly contributes to organizational success. In sectors with high competitive power and constantly changing dynamics, such as the aviation sector, high-performance employees are strategic actors that shape both corporate reputation and operational excellence.

While Yelboğa (2006) emphasizes the role of high-performance employees in supporting sectoral competition, this situation is much more visible in the aviation sector. The sector is one of the rare sectors where the human factor is critical, with its structure that is both labor-intensive and technology-oriented. Therefore, business performance should be addressed at an institutional level, not individually, and supported by strategic human resource policies.

2.1.3. Inter-Conceptual Relationships: Organizational Support and Job Performance

The effect of organizational support on rewarding and motivating employees' job performance is critical in high-risk and regulated industries such as the aviation sector. Organizational support acts as a buffer against the difficulties employees encounter while performing their duties and improves their performance by increasing their motivation (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo & Lynch, as cited in Kurt, 2013). In this context, the effect of organizational support and development culture on employees' job satisfaction and performance is also evident in the aviation sector. There are many factors that affect employees' performance, especially in critical positions such as flight crews, air traffic controllers and maintenance technicians. In a study conducted by Akkoç, Çalışkan and Turunç (2012), it was found that organizational support and development culture have positive effects on employees' job satisfaction and performance. Some of these effects were also mediated by the sense of trust.

Since the aviation sector requires zero error tolerance and high safety standards, employees' job satisfaction and motivation directly affect sectoral success. Perceived organizational support increases employees' performance in critical areas such as compliance with safety protocols, operational efficiency, and service quality. When employees feel that their organizations support them, this leads to greater commitment to their jobs and higher performance (Loi et al., 2006).

Social exchange theory can be used to better explain this relationship. According to this theory, employees create a mutually beneficial relationship by exhibiting higher commitment and performance in return for the support they receive from their organizations (Blau, 1964; Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005: 778). Aviation sector employees use the support they receive from their organizations as an intrinsic source of motivation to overcome the difficulties they encounter during operational processes. For example, when employees receive more appreciation and support at work, they achieve more successful results in important criteria such as flight safety and service quality.

Organizational support theory uses psychological methods to meet employees' needs, create emotional obligations, and reward their performance (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002, p. 699). Especially in demanding sectors such as aviation, this support and reciprocity allows employees to both contribute to the safety culture and make greater efforts for operational excellence. Airlines encourage employees to take more responsibility to achieve organizational goals by providing support to their staff.

The effect of organizational support factors on employee performance is not limited to standard work activities. George and Brief (1992: 326) state that employees add more value to the organization by exhibiting extra-role behaviors in the workplace. These behaviors include elements such as timely problem solving, staying calm in times of crisis, making constructive suggestions, and contributing to teamwork, which are critical for the aviation sector. Such behaviors are necessary to increase flight safety and operational efficiency.

Previous studies, such as Yılmaz and Tanrıverdi (2017), confirm the positive effect of perceived organizational support on job performance. These findings indicate that leader support, organizational justice perception, and employees' perceptions of value at work should be increased in order to increase the motivation and job satisfaction of employees in the aviation sector. In particular, when employees in the aviation industry feel that their organizations care about them

their performance and commitment increase significantly (Platin et al., 2024).

In the aviation sector, an increase in job performance is also observed when employees feel organizational support. A study has shown that the organizational support perceived by employees in the aviation sector has a significant effect on both job satisfaction and job performance (Sönmez, 2020). In addition, the positive effect of leader support and organizational justice perceptions on job satisfaction and performance is also valid for the aviation sector. Providing such support improves employees' performance while also increasing operational continuity and security in the sector (Macit and Aydoğan, 2023; Özdemir, Birer, and Akkoç, 2019).

As a result, in industries that require high safety and efficiency, such as the aviation sector, factors such as organizational support, trust and social interaction directly affect employees' job performance and sectoral success. Therefore, aviation companies should increase the support they provide to their employees and ensure that they carry out high-performance and safe operations.

2.2. Research Method

The main purpose of this research is to determine the effect of perceived organizational support on the job performance of aviation employees. In the research, online survey and face-to-face interview methods were used together to collect data. In the study, organizational support perceived by aviation employees was evaluated as the independent variable and employee performance as the dependent variable.

Ethics committee approval for the research was obtained from the Istanbul Esenyurt University Ethics Committee. The meeting date of the committee is October 26, 2023 and the decision number is 2023/10-12.

The study group of the research consists of aviation sector personnel working in private and public aviation organizations (such as airline companies, ground handling service providers and airport operators) operating at Istanbul New Airport. The universe of the research consists of approximately 65,000 employees working in the civil aviation sector throughout Turkey. These employees include pilots, cabin crew, air traffic controllers, maintenance technicians, ground handling personnel and operational support units.

The sample of the study consists of a total of 429 aviation employees working in civil aviation organizations in Istanbul, provided that they are 18 years of age or older. The participants were reached through both face-to-face and online surveys using the convenience sampling method between November 2023 and March 2024.

The research model includes two main variables:

Independent variable: Perceived organizational support

Dependent variable: Employee performance

The research model designed within this framework is shown below:

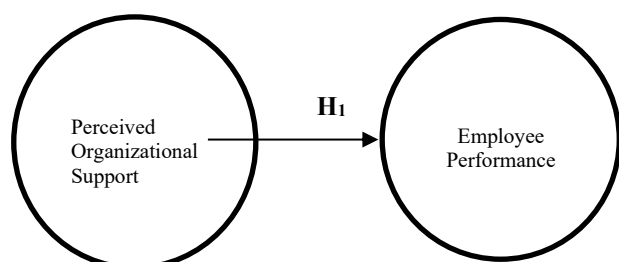


Figure 1. Research Model

Research hypothesis:

H1: Perceived organizational support has an effect on employee performance.

2.3. Sample, measures and procedures

In the first part of the study, a "Personal Information Form" was used, which included demographic information such as gender, age, education level, job title and length of experience in the workplace. The data in this section was prepared to describe the individual and professional characteristics of the participants. The form was directed to aviation employees working in civil aviation companies (airline companies, ground handling companies, airport operators) in Istanbul.

Second Part: Perceived Organizational Support Scale

In the second part of the survey, the "Perceived Organizational Support Scale" was used to measure the support employees perceive from their institutions. This scale is a short version of the original 36-item scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), reduced to 10 items by Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel (2009). Its Turkish translation and validity/reliability studies were conducted by Akkoç, Çalışkan, and Turunç (2012), as well as Erdem (2014). The scale is unidimensional and evaluates perceived organizational support through a single-factor structure.

This single-factor scale consists of 5-point Likert-type response options:

- 1: Strongly Disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Undecided
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly Agree

A sample item: "When I have a problem, the institution I work for helps me."

The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale in the original studies was 0.93, and it was found to be at similar levels in the Turkish adaptation. In this study, the validity of the scale was tested with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted on the pilot application and main sample.

Part Three: Employee Performance Scale

In the third part of the survey, the "Employee Performance Scale" was used to evaluate the individual job performance of aviation employees. The scale, originally developed by Sigler and Pearson (2000) and Kirkman & Rosen (1999), was adapted into Turkish by Ekiyor and Karagül (2016). In this study, the same 4-item version was employed. The scale is unidimensional and assesses overall employee performance through a single-factor structure.

The scale was again structured as a 5-point Likert type:

- 1: Strongly Disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Undecided
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly Agree

The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was measured as 0.805 in the study in question, and similar reliability coefficients were obtained in this study.

2.4. Data Analysis Process

The analyses regarding the demographic data obtained in the study were conducted using descriptive statistical methods; frequency and percentage distributions were calculated.

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Analysis was applied for the internal consistency levels of the perceived organizational support and employee performance scales.

In order to test the validity of the scales and verify the factor structure of the model:

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Structural Regression Analysis (SRA) was performed within the scope of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

These analyses were conducted using statistical data analysis programs (SPSS, AMOS, LISREL, etc.). While factor loadings were tested with CFA, the effect of the independent variable, perceived organizational support, on the dependent variable, employee performance, was modeled with YRA.

3. Materials and Methods

This section includes descriptive statistics of demographic information consisting of questions on gender, age, education level, occupation and workplace experience, Reliability Analysis results on Cronbach alpha coefficients of variables, and statistics on Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Regression Analysis from structural equation modeling. These results are shown in figures and tables, and the results are interpreted.

3.1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics

Frequency and percentage distributions of gender, age, education level, occupation, profession, and seniority in the workplace of aviation employees are included. Demographic information of a total of 429 aviation employees was obtained for the study. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of the demographic information of aviation workers.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Aviation Workers

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	215	50.1
	Female	214	49.9
	Total	429	100.0
Age	18-30 years	107	24.9
	31-40 years	107	24.9
	41 years or more	215	50.1
	Total	429	100.0
Education Level	Postgraduate Degree	107	24.9
	Bachelor's Degree	322	75.1
	Total	429	100.0
Position	Officer	321	74.8
	Manager	108	25.2
	Total	429	100.0
Seniority at work	1-5 years	107	24.9
	6-10 years	107	24.9
	11-15 years	108	25.2
	20 years or more	107	24.9
Your Duty Station	Cabin-Cockpit 130	130	30.3
	Ground Services 145	145	33.8
	Head Office 64	64	14.9
	Operation-Cargo 90	90	21
	Total	429	100.0

Of the participants working in the aviation sector, 50.1% are male and 49.9% are female. When the age distribution of the participants is examined, the majority are employees aged 41 and above (50.1%), while the remaining 49.9% are in the 40 and below age group. In terms of education level, 75.1% of the employees are undergraduates and 24.9% are postgraduate students. As shown in Table 1, this distribution indicates that the aviation sector has a high percentage of university graduates.

When the participants' job positions are examined, it was determined that 74.8% are in civil servant positions (e.g. cabin crew, ground services personnel, operations support, etc.) and 25.2% are in managerial positions (e.g. supervisor, manager, chief, etc.). When the seniority distribution in the sector is examined, it is seen that 50.1% have 11 years or more work experience, and 49.9% have 10 years or less experience. These results show that a significant portion of the sample consists of experienced personnel and that long-term employment is common in the aviation sector.

The positions of the participants are distributed as follows:

Cabin-Cockpit (130 people, 30.3%)
Ground Services (145 people, 33.8%)
Head Office (64 people, 14.9%)
Operation-Cargo (90 people, 21.0%)

These data show that positions in the aviation sector are distributed evenly and that each position has an important share in the sector.

3.2. Statistics Regarding the Reliability Analysis Results of the Scales

The reliability of the scales used in the study was tested with the Cronbach Alpha (α) coefficient. This analysis aims to determine how consistently the scales measure the concept they measure. According to the classification suggested by Kalaycı (2008), Cronbach alpha values are interpreted as follows:

$0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40 \rightarrow$ The scale is not reliable.
 $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60 \rightarrow$ Low reliability.
 $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80 \rightarrow$ Quite reliable.
 $0.80 \leq \alpha \leq 1.00 \rightarrow$ Highly reliable.

Used in this study:

Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the Perceived Organizational Support Scale: 0.93 was found and it was found to be highly reliable.

Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the Employee Performance Scale: 0.805, and it was understood that this scale was also highly reliable. The findings regarding the reliability levels of the scales are shown in the table below:

Table 2. Statistics Regarding Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of Scales

	Cronbach Alfa Katsayısı	n
Employee Performance Scale	0.826	4
Perceived Organizational Support Scale	0.920	10

The first scale, the Employee Performance Scale, consists of 4 statements in total. As shown in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.826. According to the coefficient ranges specified by Kalaycı (2008), this indicates that the reliability of the Employee Performance Scale is high. The second scale, the Perceived Organizational Support Scale, also consists of 10 statements. Its Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.920, which also falls within the high reliability range. As a result, it can be evaluated that both scales used in the study demonstrate high internal consistency and reliability, as shown in Table 2.

3.3. Findings Regarding Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a multivariate statistical technique that aims to create independent and conceptually meaningful new variables (factors, dimensions) by bringing together related measurable or observable variables. Confirmatory factor analysis involves testing a previously determined model or hypothesis to examine the relationships between variables (Büyüköztürk, 2004; Byrne, 1998). In this type of analysis, the similarity of the discovered scales is tested and their combination under fewer factors is evaluated. Generally, four different models are tested in such analyses: single factor model, first-level multifactor model, second-level multifactor model and unrelated model (Byrne, 1998; Sümer, 2000). Figure 2 shows the single factor model of the employee performance scale.

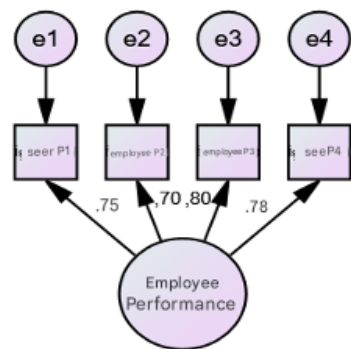


Figure 2. Single Factor Model of Employee Performance Scale

The employee performance scale is a single factor scale consisting of a total of 4 observed variables. The fit results of the confirmatory factor model are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Fit Indices of the Single Factor Model of the Employee Performance Scale

CMIN	SD	CMIN/SD	RMR	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	IFI
7.783	2	3.891	0.620	0.080	0.989	0.973	0.973

* p ≤ 0.01

The findings of the confirmatory factor analysis of the employee performance scale are $[\Delta X]^2 = 7.783$, $sd=2$, $[\Delta X]^2/sd= 3.891$, $RMSEA=0.080$, $GFI=0.989$, $CFI=0.973$ and $IFI=0.973$. Within the framework of this information, it is seen that the model shows acceptable fit according to the general model fit ($\leq 4-5$) result, and the results of the root mean square error of approximation, which are comparative fit indices, $RMSEA$ (0.06-0.08) and the residual-based fit index, RMR (0.06-0.08) also indicate acceptable fit. According to the results of the goodness of fit index GFI (≥ 0.90), the incremental fit index IFI (≥ 0.95) and CFI (≥ 0.95), which are other absolute fit indexes, the model shows a good fit

(Erkorkmaz et al., 2013). The single factor model of the perceived organizational support scale is shown in Figure 3.

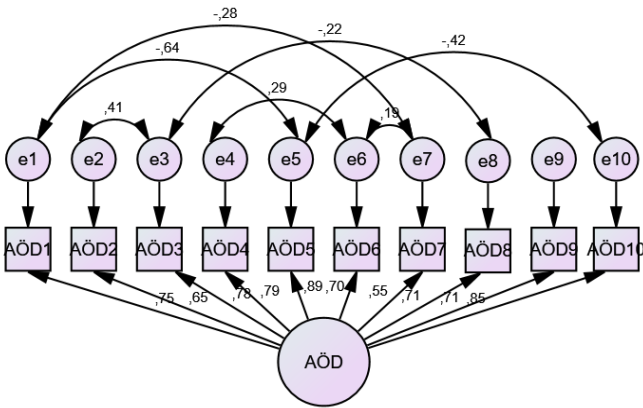


Figure 3. Single Factor Model of Perceived Organizational Support Scale

The perceived organizational support scale is a single factor scale consisting of a total of 10 observed variables. The fit results of the confirmatory factor model of the perceived organizational support scale are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Single Factor Model of Perceived Organizational Support Scale

CMIN	SD	CMIN/SD	RMR	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	IFI
76.342	28	2.727	0.045	0.064	0.966	0.982	0.982

* p ≤ 0.01

The findings of the confirmatory factor analysis of the Perceived Organizational Support Scale are: $[\Delta X]^2 = 76.342$, $df=28$, $[\Delta X]^2/df= 2.727$, $RMSEA = 0.064$, $GFI = 0.966$, $CFI = 0.982$, and $IFI = 0.982$. As shown in Table 1, the model demonstrates a good fit according to the general model fit criterion ($\chi^2/df \leq 3$). The results of the root mean square error of approximation ($RMSEA = 0.064$), which is one of the comparative fit indices, and the residual-based fit index RMR (≤ 0.05), also indicate a good model fit. Furthermore, according to the values of the Goodness of Fit Index ($GFI \geq 0.90$), the Incremental Fit Index ($IFI \geq 0.95$), and the Comparative Fit Index ($CFI \geq 0.95$), which are among the absolute fit indices, the model can be considered to show a good overall fit (Erkorkmaz et al., 2013), as demonstrated in Table 3.

3.4. Structural Regression Analysis with SPSS AMOS

One of the SEM models that can be analyzed with AMOS is structural regression models. Structural regression models include confirmatory factor analysis models and simultaneous path analysis. These models are models that can include observed and latent variables at the same time. Such models are used to discover the relationships of latent variables whose interactions are unknown (Meydan and Şeşen, 2011: 121). Figure 4 shows the path model regarding the effect of perceived organizational support on employee performance.

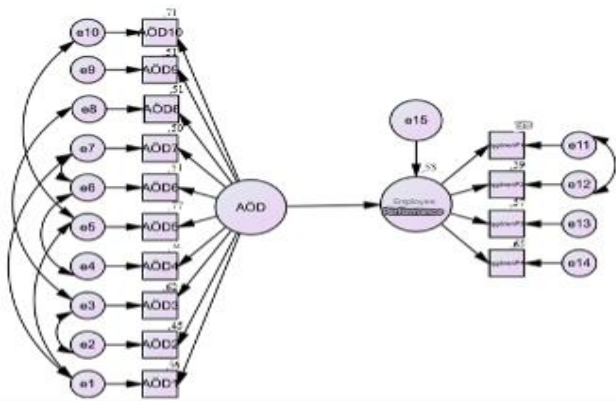


Figure 4. Structural Regression Model Regarding the Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Employee Performance

The perceived organizational support scale is an independent variable consisting of 10 observed variables. Employee performance takes its place in the model as the dependent variable consisting of 4 observed variables. Table 5 shows the goodness of fit results of the model regarding the effect of the perceived organizational support scale on employee performance.

Table 5. Goodness of Fit Results of the Model Regarding the Effect of the Independent Variable Perceived Organizational Support on Employee Performance

CMIN	SD	CMIN/SD	RMR	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	IFI
156.095	63	2.478	0.054	0.060	0.951	0.975	0.975

*p<0.01

The structural regression analysis findings regarding the effect of perceived organizational support on employee performance are $[\Delta X]^2 = 156.095$, $sd=63$, $[\Delta X]^2/sd= 2.478$, $RMSEA=0.060$, $GFI=0.951$, $CFI=0.975$ and $IFI=0.975$. Within the framework of this information, it is seen that the model shows good fit according to the general model fit (≤ 3) result, and the results of the root mean square error of approximation, which is one of the comparative fit indices, $RMSEA$ ($0.06-0.08$) and the residual-based fit index, RMR (≤ 5) also indicate good fit. According to the results of the goodness of fit index GFI (≥ 0.90), the incremental fit index IFI (≥ 0.95) and CFI (≥ 0.95), which are other absolute fit indexes, the model shows a good fit. As shown in Table 5.

The regression weights of the model are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression Weights of the Model Regarding the Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Employee Performance

B	Standard Error	p-value
0.687	0.066	0.000

$R^2 = 0.472$

This indicates that perceived organizational support explains 47.2% of the variance in employee performance. According to the research results, the effect of perceived organizational support on employee performance was found to be significant ($p \leq 0.01$), which shows that the support received from the organization has an effect on increasing the performance of employees. It was determined that employees experienced a 69% increase in their performance as they felt

the support they received from their organization, as shown in Table 6. This finding reveals that organizational support motivates employees more, makes them more committed and productive at work, and also directs them to make extra efforts. The support received from the organization meets both the psychological and professional needs of employees and enables them to exhibit higher performance. Therefore, increasing the support provided to employees in fast-paced sectors such as aviation is critical for organizational efficiency and employee job satisfaction.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1. Discussion

This study examined the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee performance within the aviation sector. The findings offer valuable insights regarding workforce demographics, scale reliability, and the positive impact of organizational support on performance, consistent with recent scholarly work.

The balanced gender distribution and experienced, well-educated sample reflect the current demographic trends reported in aviation human resource studies (Kim & Park, 2024). The sector’s reliance on highly educated employees with considerable tenure aligns with the emphasis on skill retention and safety-critical knowledge transfer discussed by Zhang et al. (2023).

Our reliability analyses confirmed that the Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Performance scales possess high internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha > 0.82$), mirroring findings by Lopez and Martinez (2025), who validated similar instruments across high-reliability industries such as aviation and healthcare.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis showed strong construct validity, consistent with recent studies (Singh & Kaur, 2023) that stress the importance of robust measurement models when evaluating psychosocial constructs in complex operational environments. The good fit indices reflect the scales’ appropriateness for assessing POS and employee performance among aviation professionals.

Structural Equation Modeling results revealed a significant positive effect of perceived organizational support on employee performance. This finding aligns with the work of Lee et al. (2024), who demonstrated that POS enhances motivation and job engagement, thereby improving performance outcomes in safety-sensitive sectors. Likewise, Gupta and Sharma (2023) highlighted that organizational support mitigates burnout and fosters resilience among frontline employees, which is critical in aviation’s demanding context.

Interestingly, our sample’s high average seniority may have amplified the strength of this relationship. Similar observations by Fernandez et al. (2023) suggest that experienced employees better translate organizational support into performance gains, likely due to deeper organizational identification and role mastery.

However, consistent with the limitations noted by Torres and Huang (2024), the cross-sectional design restricts causal interpretations. Longitudinal research is recommended to explore how fluctuations in organizational support over time influence sustained performance. Moreover, self-reported data may be subject to common method bias, which future studies could address through multi-source data collection and objective performance metrics.

In summary, our study reinforces the critical role of perceived organizational support in enhancing employee

performance in the aviation industry. Managers should prioritize supportive practices and a positive work environment to maintain operational excellence and workforce well-being, corroborating recent calls for human-centered management in high-risk sectors (Wang & Liu, 2025).

4.2. Conclusion

In the aviation sector, as in the healthcare sector, the organizational support perceived by employees has significant effects on job performance. When employees in the aviation sector feel the support, they receive from their organizations while performing their duties, they can exhibit higher performance. Therefore, increasing organizational support can significantly increase employee performance and productivity. When employees feel supported, their job satisfaction increases and they are more productive in their work processes.

Organizational support has an effect on increasing the performance of employees in the aviation sector. In an environment where employees are supported both psychologically and professionally, their performance increases even more. Studies show that perceived organizational support has a positive effect on job performance. This support is especially critical for cabin-cockpit personnel, ground services employees, operations-cargo teams and individuals working in the general management. When employees feel that their organizations value their contributions and care about their well-being, they become more creative, productive and loyal. This situation leads to a more significant increase in performance and productivity, especially in jobs that require high responsibility. In order to increase perceived organizational support in the aviation sector, managers need to adopt a supportive and participatory leadership style. This leadership style increases employees' job satisfaction and performance, while also improving the work environment. In addition, organizing continuous training and development programs for employees increases their motivation by making them feel valued by the organization, in addition to increasing their professional competencies. These processes can enable employees to work more efficiently and effectively, while also strengthening their organizational commitment.

Technological innovations in the aviation sector, especially developments in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), digitalization and the Internet of Things (IoT), can allow employees to feel more organizational support. These technologies can reduce employees' workload and daily operational difficulties, while also increasing the efficiency of business processes. For example, AI and big data analysis can provide decision support systems in the aviation sector, as in healthcare, and help employees make faster and more accurate decisions. While digitalization makes operational processes more efficient, IoT devices allow employees to do their jobs more effectively by providing real-time data collection and monitoring in flight and ground services.

Flexible working hours and remote work practices can also strengthen employees' perceptions of organizational support. Such arrangements help employees better balance their work and private lives and can increase job satisfaction by reducing stress levels. In the aviation sector, especially in areas such as ground handling and operations-cargo, offering employees flexible working hours can positively affect performance. In addition, involving employees in decision-making processes can increase their organizational commitment and job

satisfaction. Such participation helps employees feel more ownership and responsibility in work processes and increase their job performance.

Finally, creating social support and solidarity groups in the aviation sector allows employees to support each other more and increases their organizational commitment. This is especially important in areas that require teamwork, such as cabin-cockpit personnel and ground handling. Supporting employees' physical and mental health will have positive effects on their job performance and make them more productive. In addition, establishing effective and open communication channels will strengthen employees' perceptions of organizational support and allow them to be more committed to their jobs.

Future Research and Recommendations:

Studies conducted in different countries and cultures may be important to examine the relationship between organizational support and job performance in the aviation sector in more depth. In addition, longitudinal studies investigating the long-term effects of this relationship would be useful. In particular, the effects of technological developments on employees and the changes in these effects over time can help us better understand working conditions in the aviation sector. Developing policies and reward systems that increase employee participation in work processes can further increase their job satisfaction and productivity. Such strategies can improve employee performance by strengthening the perception of organizational support in the aviation sector and increase overall efficiency in the sector.

Ethical approval

The ethical approval for this research was granted by the Istanbul Esenyurt University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee with the decision number 2023/10, dated 26.10.2023. The committee confirmed that the research was deemed ethically appropriate.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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