



## The Effect of Psychological Empowerment on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Psychological Ownership\*

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### Abstract

In this study, the mediating role of psychological ownership in the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance were examined. The research sample consisted of 492 R&D experts and engineers working in an airline company in Turkey. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that psychological ownership had a partial mediating role in the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance. As a result of this research, it is predicted that the perception of empowerment and the employees' sense of ownership will positively affect employee performance. The high level of employee performance will bring organizations to a more advantageous position in achieving their goals.

### Keywords

Psychological Empowerment, Psychological Ownership, Employee Performance

JEL Classification: M10

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## 1. Introduction

In today's world, organizations focus on new approaches to improve the performance of their employees. Within this scope, the sense of commitment and ownership an employee harbors for her or his organization plays a critical role in accomplishing the organization's goals. The most crucial power organizations have in their existence and development is their human resources. Employee performance being at the desired levels in terms of the organization is essential for the sustainability and reputation of the organization.

Employee performance may change over time due to various reasons. One factor that increases employee performance is that the employee feels psychologically empowered. Psychological empowerment refers to the decision-making and application of actions carried out by employees in situations related to their work based on their own abilities. Empowerment, thus, psychological empowerment, provides self-confidence for the employee, making it easier for them to make individual decisions. Employees who feel psychologically empowered are expected to improve their organizational performance. However, another factor that is expected to improve employee performance is psychological ownership. This feeling of ownership is expected to increase employee performance due to their commitment to material objects or moral situations. In this study, the mediator role of psychological ownership and the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance was analyzed, and the findings were evaluated.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### Psychological Empowerment

Organizations have rising expectations regarding employee performance to achieve success in an increasingly competitive environment. In a global world, the need to respond faster to increasing customer expectations and rapidly evolving technology has forced organizations to apply new approaches in business management. In this regard, the initiative of employees of an organization with a hierarchical structure, having creative thinking and responsibilities for their actions, in other words shifting organizations to be more employee-centric, shows effective results for both organizations and employees. In order to realize all these expectations, employees need to be psychologically empowered (Quinn&Spreitzer, 1997:37)

The concept of empowerment should consider activities focused on meeting the needs of individuals adhering to their cultural characteristics (Honold, 1997:202). The phenomenon of empowerment involves processes aimed at increasing the abilities of employees. Employees who feel empowered develop themselves in accessing information necessary to reach their goals, accessing resources to increase

organizational activity, and gaining control over these resources (Zimmerman, 1995:582).

Conger and Kanungo (1988:473) pointed out the importance of power, expressing that power is a requirement for internal phenomenon, and empowerment is a management practice and a source of motivation for employees. In other words, empowerment is a concept that aims to enable individual initiative when making decisions about work without relying on management control and have the ability to see problems through and come up with solutions. (Spreitzer, 1995). Psychological empowerment is an essential approach for employees in order to create a more substantial structure for organizations in a globalized world. Empowered employees are expected to contribute positively to their organizations.

Psychological empowerment is an employees' perceptions regarding the work environment and their duties within the organization (Chang et al., 2010:428). Psychological empowerment gives employees the freedom, opportunities, and responsibilities to participate in decision-making (Ro ve Chen, 2011:422) and actively partake in organizational tasks (Fuller et al., 1999:389-390).

According to Zimmerman, empowerment becomes weaker or stronger due to perceptual differences. Psychological empowerment creates a sense of control and awareness of an individual's environment and makes the individual an active participant in their environment. Goals such as increasing knowledge, skill levels, and contribution to decision-making in their respective environments can help achieve the desired levels of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995:592,593).

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) discussed psychological empowerment in four dimensions within the "cognitive model" they developed: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact.

There must be an alignment between the tasks employees get from the organization and an employees' traditional and cultural values, beliefs, objectives, and goals. It is believed that psychological empowerment will be more effective if employees' values align with the tasks they get from the organization (Spreitzer, 1995:1443).

Competence is the belief in an individual's ability to use their skills in their field of work. Dimension of competence affects whether the tasks can be accomplished, the individual's efforts to accomplish said tasks, and the level of diligence for accomplishing tasks (Gist,1987:472).

Self-determination refers to the availability of opportunity to choose to initiate and regulate actions individuals will take in their employment (Deci et al., 1989). Self-determination is a sense of freedom for individuals to carry out their current affairs (Stander & Rothmann, 2009:197). Self-determination shows that employees

are responsible for performing their duties independently and making decisions in their activities (Sheikhpoor&Sheikhpoor, 2015:103).

Impact refers to the extent to which employees can make a difference by revealing the desired effect on processes of work performance (Thomas &Velthouse, 1990:672). Employees feel their strength to the extent of their impact on work-related issues (Ari&Ergeneli, 2003:135). Employees do not feel empowered if they believe that their displayed behavior does not affect the system they are a part of (Thomas &Velthouse, 1990:673).

### **Psychological Ownership**

The concept of psychological ownership originates from Pierce et al. (2001:229), defined as individuals feeling all or part of an abstract or concrete goal as their own. The core of psychological ownership relies on the sense of connectivity and relation to a situation from a psychological point of view. In other words, psychological ownership can be described as a phenomenon in which an employee develops positive emotions for the current tasks and experiences a relative sense of ownership for it (Van Dyne &Pierce, 2004:439). “Psychological ownership is the feeling of possession over a target – an object, concept, organization, or another person – that may or may not be supported by formal ownership. This ownership not only defines the object (“that is my team”) but also, more importantly, the owner (“my team is Oxford United; I am an Oxford United fan”). Individuals become invested in the ownership target as an expression of who they are and that to which they belong (Campbell Pickford, Joy, ve Roll, 2016:6).

Pierce et al. (2001:300) stated that three main concepts form the foundations for psychological ownership, contributing to the individual desire for ownership. These three concepts are;

- *Efficiency and control*: The concept of ownership has the function of being effective in events that occur. In other words, being effective includes influencing and directing the environment in which a person is located to achieve their desired results (Furby, 1978:60).
- *Self-identity*: Individuals identify with what they have (Pickford et al., 2016:7). Some individuals may describe themselves as yacht owners, sports car drivers, or antique collectors. Thus, such objects create a sense of psychological ownership in their owners, causing them to identify and express themselves differently from others, forming personal identities (Avey et al., 2009:178). In this direction, it is stated that ownership leads to individual identification and expression of said identity to other individuals and ensures the continuity of created self-identity (Pierce vd., 2003:89).

· *Having a place*: Having a place is an inseparable part of human nature which can be created with a sense of ownership (Pickford et al., 2016:7). If individuals feel a sense of belonging to an organization or business, they can form psychological ownership (Pierce et al., 2001:300). If an organization meets individuals' sense of ownership, their relations with the said organization will also deepen (Pickford et al., 2016:7).

### **Employee Performance**

Employee performance is a concept that expresses to the extent to which the employee performs the obligations and duties they must perform (İllez&Güner, 2006:325). Employee performance is not the result of activities conducted but rather that the activities themselves have been done for their sake (Suliman, 2001:1049). Along with this statement, Suliman refers to performance as behavior that employees can identify within their capacity and competence concerning the organization's goals.

Tasks that employees in organizations perform according to their characteristics and abilities constitute employee performance (Gümüştekin&Öztemiz, 2005:281). Campbell (1990) stated that the priority in employee performance is informing employees about the organization's goals. Performance resulting from this behavior is not an output but a collection of behaviors (Campbell, 1990:704). In parallel, employee performance constitutes a collective behavior employees display in a time frame added to the organization's values (Motowidlo et al., 1996).

### **Relation Between Concepts**

It is expected that the perception of empowerment will affect the quantity and quality of products and services that an individual working in the organization displays. Employees that think their actions are meaningful in the work environment have the capability to successfully accomplish tasks, with the ability that choose options that fulfill requirements in order to complete tasks and these beliefs that they can affect the working environment are expected to display a higher performance as compared to those companies with less empowered employees (Sigler & Pearson, 2000:32). In addition, according to the findings from the studies of Chang et al., psychologically empowered nurses are more satisfied with their work and have a higher sense of commitment to their organization (Chang et al., 2010:428). Another concept we explored in the study, psychological ownership, was mentioned in some of the results of the study conducted by Olckers and Du Plessis (2012). These results revealed that psychological ownership results in a higher sense of commitment to organizations by employees and a higher sense of accountability, develop extra-role activities, higher work satisfaction, employees show higher organizational performance, work harder to display acts of organizational citizenship, stay connected to the organization

they work in/with and have more organizational self-esteem (Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012:10). When observing the unwanted results in organizations, employees with an inflated sense of ownership can display behaviors such as setting an excessive time for their goals, refusing to cooperate with others, deny sharing information and avoid actions that may benefit the organization in order to accomplish their individual goals (Avey vd., 2009:176) because the sense of ownership occurs at an excessive level. When employees of an organization witness a radical change in goals they have a strong sense of ownership of, they become disillusioned and stressed. Pierce said negative results were not typical in his studies (Pierce vd., 2003:101).

Employee performance affects organizations on a variety of levels. Employees who have high performance contribute positively to the goals and objectives of the organization by successfully performing their obligations and business tasks (İllez & Güner, 2006:325). An organization succeeds due to the performance of its employees. For this reason, redirecting employee performance to achieve higher levels will also benefit organizational performance. Organizations, in order to increase employee performance, should provide working environments where employees can feel independent and establish an order in which they can improve their performance by themselves (Çöl, 2011:45). Psychological empowerment and psychological ownership have been prominent in recent years as basic concepts that can ensure maximum efficiency from employee performance.

### 3. Methodology

Studies have shown that psychological ownership creates a place for employees due to the establishment of psychological ownership, thus displaying a positive attitude towards efficiency in the workplace and work in general. This attitude of employees will have a positive impact on their performance. As a result of the literature review, it was found that the concepts of psychological empowerment and psychological ownership needed to be studied in connection with employee performance. For this reason, in the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance, the mediator effect of psychological ownership marks the study's actual purpose.

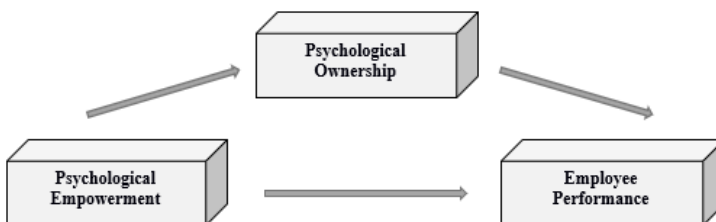


Figure 1. Research Model

For research, the following hypotheses have been put forward:

H<sub>1</sub>: Psychological empowerment affects employee performance.

H<sub>2</sub>: Psychological empowerment affects psychological ownership.

H<sub>3</sub>: Psychological ownership has a mediating role in the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance.

H<sub>3a</sub>: Psychological ownership has a mediating role in the effect of the meaning dimension of psychological empowerment on employee performance.

H<sub>3b</sub>: Psychological ownership has a mediating role in the effect of competence dimension of psychological empowerment on employee performance.

H<sub>3c</sub>: Psychological ownership has a mediating role in the effect of the self-determination dimension of psychological empowerment on employee performance.

H<sub>3d</sub>: Psychological ownership has a mediating role in the effect of the impact dimension of psychological empowerment on employee performance.

The research population comprised 775 R&D experts and engineers working at an airline company leading the aviation sector in Turkey. The research consisted of 492 R&D experts and engineers. The R&D experts and engineers were chosen as the research population because their sector requires concrete decision-making skills and innovative behaviors, and performance levels are expected to be high. As a result of the aspects mentioned earlier, employee empowerment applications are practiced more commonly in this sector.

Surveys were utilized as data-gathering tools in the research. The “Psychological Empowerment Scale,” developed by Spreitzer (1995), was used to measure the concept of psychological empowerment. Spreitzer considered this scale to be four-dimensional. These dimensions are meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. A one-dimensional scale developed by Choo (1986), consisting of 12 items, was used to measure the concept of employee performance. The one-dimensional psychological ownership scale developed by Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) was used to measure the concept of psychological ownership. This scale features seven items. The 5 Likert scale was used in the measurement of the analysis.

#### **4. Research Findings and Analysis**

Data obtained using the surveys as part of the research were analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 program.

## Findings on Demographic Characteristics

This section contains demographic data for 492 airline employees. According to the data, 47.4% of the participants working in the organization were between the ages of 26 and 35. Thirty-one and a half percent of the participants were female, and 68.5% were male. Thirty-nine percent of the participants were married, and 61% were single. Fifty-five point three percent of participants were undergraduates, 33.3% were graduates and 11.4% were postgraduates. In order for the concept of psychological empowerment to be applied to employees in a healthier environment, employees must have a certain level of education. Thus, 44.7% of the sample in the study were employees with a graduate level of education. Forty point nine percent of the participants have worked within the organization for 1 to 5 years. Seventy-eight point nine percent of participants work as staff, 13.2% as lower-level managers, 6.7% as middle-level managers, and 1.2% as senior managers. Thirty-six point six percent of the participants work as R&D experts, and 63.4% as engineers.

## Reliability Analysis

The following table shows the reliability levels of the scales used in the research.

Table 1

*Reliability levels of scales.*

Variables	Items	Reliability Level
Psychological Empowerment	12	0.81
Psychological Ownership	7	0.87
Employee Performance	12	0.87

As a result of the reliability analysis of the scales, the Cronbach Alpha of psychological empowerment is 0.81, the Cronbach Alpha of psychological ownership scale is 0.87 and the Cronbach Alpha of employee performance scale is 0.87. These values obtained from the analysis show that these scales are reliable.

## Factor Analysis

### *- Factor Analysis of the Psychological Empowerment Scale*

The psychological empowerment scale KMO value is at 0.80. As can be seen, the KMO value is closer to one. Bartlett's test is meaningful at a value of 0.000. Given these values, it was decided that the relevant data were suitable for factor analysis (Durmuş, 2011: 80). Basic components factor analysis was applied to the psychological empowerment scale using the varimax rotation method. The psychological empowerment scale revealed a total variance of 68.87%. Analysis revealed that the psychological empowerment scale had taken shape with 12 items and was four-dimensional as with the original scale.



### - Factor Analysis of the Psychological Ownership Scale

The psychological ownership scale KMO value is at 0.84. As can be seen, the KMO value is closer to one. Bartlett's test is meaningful at a value of 0.000. Given these values, it was decided that the relevant data were suitable for factor analysis. Basic components factor analysis was applied to the psychological ownership scale using the varimax rotation method. The psychological ownership scale revealed a total variance of 55.50%. Analysis revealed that the psychological ownership scale had taken shape with seven items and was single-dimensional as with the original scale.

### - Factor Analysis of Employee Performance Scale

The employee performance scale KMO value is at 0.89. As can be seen, the KMO value is closer to one. Bartlett's test is meaningful at a value of 0,000. Given these values, it was decided that the relevant data were suitable for factor analysis. Basic components factor analysis was applied to the employee performance scale using the varimax rotation method. The employee performance scale revealed a total variance of 41,19%. Analysis revealed that the employee performance scale had taken shape with 12 items and was single dimensional as with the original scale.

## Regression Analysis

The study aimed to investigate the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance and the mediator role of psychological ownership on this relationship. First, the effect of the psychological empowerment on the employee performance was evaluated.

Table 2

### *H<sub>1</sub>* Regression Analysis Results

<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance				
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Psychological Empowerment	0.535	11.962	0.000	1.000
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.224 F=143.078 p=0.000</b>				

According to the results of the first-stage regression analysis, the perception of psychological empowerment affects employee performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). The change in psychological empowerment accounts for 22.4% of the change in employee performance ( $R^2=0.224$ ). With this data, when the psychological empowerment score increases by one unit, the employee performance score increases by 0.535. The Variance Inflation Factor value is 1.000. This result shows that there is no multicollinearity. In the second step, to test the H<sub>2</sub> hypothesis independent variable “psychological empowerment” effects on “psychological ownership” was evaluated.

Table 3

*H<sub>2</sub>-Regression Analysis Results*

<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Psychological Ownership				
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Psychological Empowerment	0.359	5.257	0.000	1.000
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>= 0.051 F=27.633 p=0.000</b>				

According to the regression analysis of hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>, the perception of psychological empowerment of the participants in the study affects psychological ownership (p< 0.05). Change in psychological empowerment explains 5.1% of the change in psychological ownership (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.051). In addition, psychological ownership increases by 0.359 when the psychological empowerment score increases by one unit. The Variance Inflation Factor value is 1.000. This result shows that there is no multicollinearity. Below, the effect of psychological empowerment and psychological ownership on employee performance was evaluated.

Table 4

*H<sub>3</sub>-Regression Analysis Results*

<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance				
<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Psychological Empowerment	0.461	10.555	0.000	1.056
Psychological Ownership	0.206	7.324	0.000	1.056
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>= 0,300 F=106.045 p=0.000</b>				

As shown in Table 4, the effect of psychological ownership on employee performance is significant (p< 0.05). In Table 2, β=0.535, while in Table 4, β=0.461. In these circumstances, psychological ownership has a partial intermediary effect. The Variance Inflation Factor value is 1.056 for both of them. This result shows that there is no multicollinearity. According to the data mentioned above, the H<sub>3</sub> hypothesis is partially accepted. Sub-hypothesis tests are given below, respectively.

Table 5

*H<sub>3a</sub>-Regression Analysis Results*

<b>First Stage Regression Analysis Results</b>				
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance				
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	
Meaning	0.303	8.996	0.000	
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.140 F=80.931 p=0.000</b>				
<b>Second Stage Regression Analysis Results</b>				
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Psychological Ownership				
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	
Meaning	0.167	3.355	0.001	
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.020 F=11.255 p=0.001</b>				
<b>Third Stage Regression Analysis Results</b>				
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance				

Independent Variables	$\beta$	t	p
Meaning	0.263	8.247	0.000
Psychological Ownership	0.239	8.320	0.000
<b>Adjusted <math>R^2=0,245</math> F =80,709 p=0,000</b>			

First-stage regression analysis results show that participants who have taken part in the study have perceived the meaning, thus resulting in a significant effect on their performance ( $p<0.05$ ). In the second stage, the meaning dimension of psychological empowerment has a significant effect on psychological ownership ( $p<0.05$ ). In the third stage, the effect of psychological ownership on employee performance is noticeable ( $p<0.05$ ). In the first stage, the beta factor was 0.303; in the third stage, it decreased to 0.263. In these circumstances, psychological ownership has a partial mediator effect. According to the data, the  $H_{3a}$  hypothesis is partially accepted.

Tablo 6

*H<sub>3b</sub>-Regression Analysis Results*

First Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance			
Independent Variable	$\beta$	t	p
Competence	0.453	11.644	0.000
<b>Adjusted <math>R^2=0.215</math> F =135.575 p=0.000</b>			
Second Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Psychological Ownership			
Independent Variable	$\beta$	t	p
Competence	0.265	4.453	0.000
<b>Adjusted <math>R^2=0,037</math> F =19,830 p=0,000</b>			
Third Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance			
Independent Variable	$\beta$	t	p
Competence	0.396	10.555	0.000
Psychological Ownership	0.217	7.755	0.000
<b>Adjusted <math>R^2=0,300</math> F =106.044 p=0.000</b>			

In the first stage, competence appears to impact employee performance ( $p<0.05$ ) significantly. In the second stage, the competence dimension of psychological empowerment has a significant effect on psychological ownership ( $p<0.05$ ). In the third stage, the effect of psychological ownership on employee performance is significant ( $p<0.05$ ). In the first stage, the beta factor is 0.453, while in the third stage, it appears that this factor decreases to 0.396. In these circumstances, psychological ownership has a partial intermediary effect. According to the data, the  $H_{3b}$  hypothesis is partially accepted.

Tablo 7

*H<sub>3c</sub>-Regression Analysis Results*

First Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance			
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Self-determination	0.256	7.557	0.000
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.103 F=57.110 p=0.000</b>			
Second Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Psychological Ownership			
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Self-determination	0.059	1.198	0.232
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0,001 F=1,453 p=0,232</b>			

The H<sub>3c</sub> first-stage regression analysis results show that the self-determination dimension has a significant effect on employee performance (p<0.05). In the second stage, the self-determination dimension does not significantly affect psychological ownership ( p>0.05). After these findings, the H<sub>3c</sub> sub-hypothesis was no longer analyzed. H<sub>3c</sub> was rejected.

Tablo 8

*H<sub>3d</sub>-Regression Analysis Results*

First Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance			
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Impact	0.141	4.935	0.000
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.047 F=24.354 p=0.000</b>			
Second Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Psychological Ownership			
<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Impact	0.211	5.372	0.000
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.054 F=28.860 p=0.000</b>			
Third Stage Regression Analysis Results			
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Employee Performance			
<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Impact	0.218	3.185	0.000
Psychological Ownership	0.251	8.140	0.000
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.158 F=46.926 p=0.000</b>			

First-stage regression analysis results show that the perception of the impact size of the participants in the study has a significant effect on performance (p<0.05). In the second stage, the impact dimension of psychological empowerment has a significant effect on psychological ownership (p<0.05). The effect of psychological ownership on employee performance, in the third stage, is significant (p<0.05). In the first stage, the β factor is 0.141, while in the third stage, this increases to 0.218. The H<sub>3d</sub> hypothesis was rejected.

As a result of the sub-hypothesis analysis, H<sub>3a</sub> and H<sub>3b</sub> hypotheses were accepted, and H<sub>3c</sub> and H<sub>3d</sub> hypotheses were rejected. The subdimensions of psychological

empowerment, meaning, and competency was noted for having psychological ownership play a partial mediating role in employee performance.

## 5. Conclusion

Due to developing technology and increasing competition, organizations always have to update themselves. In this context, the human element is one of the essential sources for organizations. Organizations ensure their sustainability through the presence of employees, so it is essential for the organization that employees feel happy and strong. Employees who believe they are empowered create meaningful value for their organization. Organizations have the power to increase their productivity by creating suitable environments for their employees. Employee empowerment in all respects will reflect positively on the organization. In this context, this study examined the impact of empowerment on employees by addressing the concept of psychological empowerment; and its role in improving employee performance from the point of view of organizations. Employees recognizing the empowerment originating from the organization (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990:667) are expected to return with their behavior in the organization as it is expected to benefit the organization to the same extent.

In this study, psychological empowerment perceptions of R&D specialists and engineers working in an airline company in Turkey were measured. The mediating role of psychological ownership in the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance has been examined. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that psychological ownership plays a partial mediator role in the effect of psychological empowerment on employee performance. Employees who feel psychologically empowered will feel a sense of competence in their work and will contribute more to the organization. In this direction, the performance of employees within the organization will increase. But, the commitment of employees with a high sense of psychological ownership to their organizations (not within our scope!) will also be higher and, this will have a positive impact on the performance of employees. It is expected that the performance of employees who feel a sense of ownership and belonging to the organization they work for will increase.

In a regression analysis conducted to examine the mediator relationship, it was observed that psychological empowerment had a positive effect on employee performance at the first stage, and the H<sub>1</sub> hypothesis was accepted. In the second stage, it was observed that psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on psychological ownership, and the H<sub>2</sub> hypothesis was accepted. At the last stage, it was observed that psychological empowerment's effect on employee performance partially mediated psychological ownership. Therefore, the H<sub>3</sub> hypothesis was partially accepted. As a result, the effect of psychological empowerment on employee

performance increases more with the presence of psychological ownership. Of the four sub-hypotheses,  $H_{3a}$  and  $H_{3b}$  were accepted, and  $H_{3c}$  and  $H_{3d}$  were rejected.

According to the findings of this study, it is believed that psychological empowerment has an effect on employee performance, and empowerment allows employees to exist more actively and usefully in the organization they work in. In a rapidly developing and digitized world, empowering employees in their organizations is essential to ensure they adapt to this new situation as quickly as possible. Empowering employees play a critical role in getting organizations to the position they want to be in the future (Doğan & Tanyıldızı, 2020:96).

Psychological empowerment includes many benefits the organization's point of view and the employee's point of view. Employees who feel powerful and, as a result, self-confident are more beneficial from the organization's point of view. If organizations want to make their employees more active in the work environment by motivating, encouraging, and using their abilities, they should pay attention to psychological empowerment.

When organizations give more responsibility to their employees, employees will improve themselves, learn to deal with problems in the process, and their self-confidence will increase. In this way, employees will be aware of their essential responsibilities. As a result, both the organization and employees will be profitable because it should be noted that psychologically empowered employees will produce more added value for the organization. In addition, organizations should engage in activities to support the formation and increase a psychological sense of ownership in employees to increase employee performance. Employees who feel ownership over things will also develop feelings of having control. In addition, one pillar of a sense of ownership, the concept of accountability, will grant employees the foundation to hold themselves and other colleagues responsible for successfully performing organizational tasks. A sense of holding someone and being accountable that develops within the framework of the concept of accountability develops a level of awareness for employees about success. This makes it more likely that the employee will be able to complete a task successfully. Organization managers get the opportunity to increase their employees' loyalty to their organizations by preparing environments where their employees have a sense of ownership towards the organization. Psychological empowerment and psychological ownership will play a role as a factor that influences organizations to increase the performance of their employees.

## **6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The results of this study contribute to the relevant literature but also contain some limitations. Firstly, the study we have conducted only includes some professional fields. In addition, it only includes some professional groups currently working in

a prestigious and reliable airline company in Turkey. This study covers a limited sample of R&D experts and engineers working in one Turkish airline company. According to the results revealed by this study, it is recommended to obtain a wider sample audience for future researchers, to study different professional groups, to make a sector-based separation of public and private companies, and to compare these differences with each other. It is also recommended that this study be conducted in different cultures, especially in regions that differ in organizational culture. Finally, to further strengthen the effects of psychological empowerment on improving employee performance, working with concepts such as psychological ownership that load a sense of belonging to the employee and develop a commitment to the organization will contribute to the field of social sciences.

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