

14th ISCA 2024

The Effect Of Perceived Organizational Support On Employee Performance With Employee Engagement As A Mediator (Study At PT. Kereta Api Indonesia Daop 5 Purwokerto)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance with employee engagement as a mediating variable at PT KAI DAOP 5 Purwokerto. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 110 employees and analyzed using multiple regression analysis and mediation testing. The results indicate that perceived organizational support has a positive effect on both employee engagement and employee performance, while employee engagement also positively affects employee performance and serves as a significant mediator in the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance. These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, which emphasizes that reciprocal relationships between organizations and employees create a supportive work environment, thereby enhancing engagement and performance. This study provides practical implications for organizations, particularly PT KAI DAOP 5 Purwokerto, to prioritize organizational support by fostering a positive work environment, providing adequate resources, and recognizing employee contributions. Additionally, enhancing employee engagement through training programs and feedback mechanisms is crucial for improving overall performance.

Keywords: perceived organizational support, employee engagement, employee performance, social exchange theory.

1. Introduction

Human resources are vital assets for organizations to achieve a competitive advantage, as they contribute talent, energy, and creativity to meet organizational goals. According to Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees who perceive positive treatment from their organization, known as Perceived Organizational Support (POS), are motivated to reciprocate through improved performance. POS reflects the extent to which employees feel their

contributions and well-being are valued, fostering emotional bonds and driving engagement. Studies by Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) confirm that POS significantly enhances employee engagement, which acts as a critical driver of performance improvement.

Employee engagement, defined as employees' enthusiasm, satisfaction, and active participation in their work, plays a pivotal role in optimizing performance. Research by (Kompasso & Sridevi (2010) demonstrates a positive link between engagement and performance, but some studies, such as Joushan et al. (2015), reveal that high engagement does not always guarantee better performance. This indicates that engagement may act as a mediating variable between POS and performance. Saks (2006) highlights that organizational support fosters engagement, which in turn enhances performance, making this interplay crucial for organizations like PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI) Daop 5 Purwokerto to address performance variability.

In the competitive transportation industry, PT KAI must maximize its human resources by strengthening POS and fostering engagement to achieve high employee performance. Variations in performance suggest that POS alone may not directly improve outcomes, but rather through the mediating role of engagement. This study aims to investigate the relationship between POS, employee engagement, and performance within PT KAI Daop 5 Purwokerto, providing insights into how organizational support can effectively translate into better employee outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET), pioneered by Peter M. Blau (1964) and George C. Homans (1961), emphasizes reciprocal relationships between individuals or groups, where social behavior is influenced by mutual exchanges within their environment. In an organizational context, SET explains how interactions based on reciprocity such as colleagues supporting each other and create beneficial relationships for all parties involved. This theory is widely applied in human resource management to enhance and understand the quality of relationships between organizations and employees. SET posits that social relationships are driven by expectations of mutual benefit, where individual behavior and the environment influence each other. In the workplace, SET is relevant for understanding how Perceived Organizational Support (POS) fosters Employee Engagement, ultimately improving performance. Moreover, Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu (2018) highlight its application in Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationships, where positive interactions between leaders and subordinates enhance loyalty, respect, and motivation. SET also explains why individuals or groups may shift affiliations when perceived rewards are inadequate, making it a valuable tool for analyzing workplace dynamics and their impact on satisfaction, motivation, performance, and productivity.

2.2 Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is a key concept in organizational behavior literature, reflecting employees' perceptions of how much their organization values their contributions and

cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees are more likely to feel supported when they experience fair treatment, opportunities for decision-making participation, and managerial support (Robbins, 2008). POS helps fulfill employees' emotional needs, provides a sense of security through organizational assistance, and fosters reciprocal relationships where employees respond with increased loyalty and performance (Chen et al., 2009; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Factors strengthening POS include organizational justice, supervisor support, favorable working conditions, and proper rewards. Additionally, employee personality and demographic factors such as age, gender, and race can influence the perceived level of organizational support (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008).

2.3 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement reflects employees' genuine appreciation and commitment to their work, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and physical involvement (Albrecht, 2010; Pringgabayu & Keizer, 2017). It is characterized by vigor (energy and resilience at work), dedication (deep involvement, enthusiasm, and pride in one's job), and absorption (focus and enjoyment at work) (Schaufeli, 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Engaged employees actively contribute to organizational success through proactive attitudes, accountability, and meaningful interactions with colleagues (Kahn, 1990; Sihombing et al., 2018). Factors influencing engagement include job resources (social, physical, and organizational support), the salience of these resources, and personal traits such as high extraversion and conscientiousness, as well as low neuroticism (Hakanen et al., 2007). Employee engagement ensures that individuals feel their work is meaningful, impactful, and aligned with personal and organizational growth.

2.4 Employee Performance

Performance refers to the results achieved based on various indicators within a job or a specific period. It encompasses outcomes at the organizational level, including managerial functions such as production, marketing, and finance, as well as individual employee achievements (Wirawan, 2009). Performance is also defined as the ability of employees to carry out tasks according to business standards and job descriptions (Siagian, 2002). According to Kartono (2002), performance is the capacity to complete tasks and meet organizational success criteria based on assigned workloads. Similarly, Moeheriono (2010) describes performance as the degree of success in implementing programs, activities, or policies to achieve the organization's goals, vision, and mission, as outlined in its strategic plan. In summary, performance reflects the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of individuals in fulfilling assigned tasks within a specific timeframe.

2.5 Hypotheses Development

2.5.1 The Influence of Perceived Organizational Support on Employee Engagement

Perceived organizational support (POS) has been shown to significantly influence employee engagement across various studies. When employees feel that the organization values their well-being, acknowledges their contributions, and provides a supportive work environment, they tend to respond with higher levels of engagement. This increased engagement is characterized by

enthusiasm, focus, and commitment to their tasks, leading to greater energy and a stronger drive to meet or exceed expectations. As a result, POS positively impacts work engagement, which ultimately contributes to improved individual and organizational performance, supporting the idea of a reciprocal relationship between employees and their organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Karatepe & Aga, 2016).

H1: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on employee engagement.

2.5.2 The influence of employee engagement on employee performance.

Studies have shown that when employees are engaged, they work with enthusiasm, focus, and commitment, leading to better job performance. Research by Nasurdin et al. (2018) and Lai et al. (2020) demonstrates that work engagement enhances job performance, as engaged employees are more likely to exceed expectations and overcome challenges. According to Kahn, (1990), employee engagement improves job quality and satisfaction, contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. In the context of Social Exchange Theory, when organizations show care for employee well-being and recognize their contributions, employees respond positively, resulting in higher engagement and improved performance.

H2: Employee engagement has a positive effect on employee performance.

2.5.3 The influence of perceived organizational support (POS) on employee performance

Research by Arshadi & Hayavi (2013) and Karatepe & Aga (2016) has shown that when employees feel valued and supported by their organization, they are more likely to demonstrate high performance, as they are motivated to contribute to the organization's goals. This positive relationship is reinforced through the Social Exchange Theory, where employees reciprocate organizational support, such as career development opportunities or fair treatment, by improving their work performance. As a result, higher perceived support leads to better employee performance, creating a cycle that benefits both the individual and the organization.

H3: Perceived organizational support (POS) has a positive effect on employee performance.

2.5.4 The influence of perceived organizational support on employee performance with employee engagement as a mediating variable.

Research has shown that employee engagement mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee performance. Studies by Karatepe & Aga (2016) and Nasurdin et al. (2018) found that POS positively influences performance, with employee engagement acting as a mediator. Saks (2006) also highlighted that employee engagement strengthens the link between organizational support and individual performance. When employees perceive support and recognition from their organization, it increases their motivation to engage more deeply in their work, which leads to improved performance. Therefore, employee engagement acts as a bridge, enhancing the positive impact of organizational support on employee performance.

H4: There is a mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance.

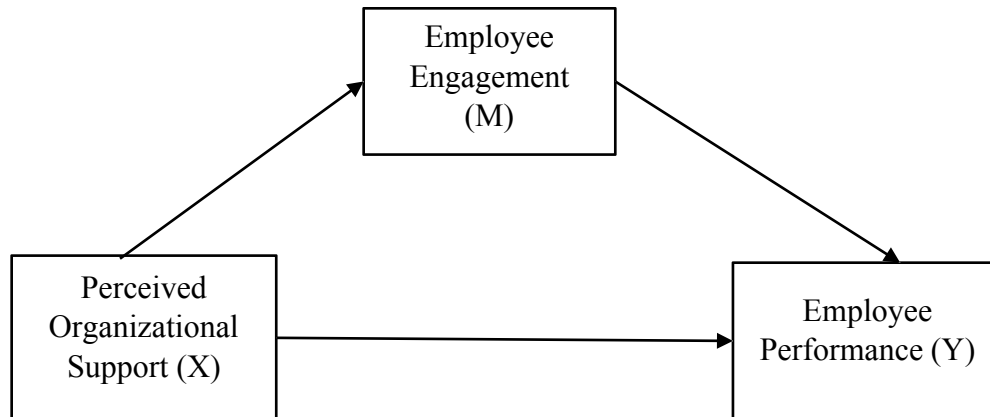


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research approach. The population consists of 140 employees of PT Kereta Api Indonesia DAOP 5 Purwokerto. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, resulting in a sample of 110 employees. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires distributed both online and offline. According to Suliyanto (2018), a questionnaire is a data collection method that involves providing respondents with a series of statements related to the research subject to obtain their responses. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure attitudes, responses, and perceptions of individuals or groups regarding social phenomena, providing a deeper understanding of the subject (Sugiyono, 2006). However, for the employee engagement variable, a 7-point scale was used. Regression analysis was employed to analyze the data in this research.

4. Results

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics of Respondents	Category	Total	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	69	62.73%
	Woman	41	37.27%
Age	20-30	21	19.09%
	31-40	43	39.09%
	41-50	41	37.27%
	51-60	5	4.55%
	61-70	0	0%
Last education	High School	73	63.36%
	Diploma	12	10.91%
	Bachelor Degree	24	21.82%
	Master Degree	1	0.91%
	Doctoral Degree	0	0%

The study results indicate that the majority of respondents are male (62.73%), with a gap of 28 individuals compared to females. This is likely due to the operational and technical nature of jobs at PT KAI DAOP 5 Purwokerto, which require physical ability and are influenced by masculine workplace norms. Most respondents are aged 31–40 years (39.09%), a productive age group with sufficient work experience to fill strategic positions. The majority have a tenure of over 10 years (66.36%), reflecting high loyalty due to job stability, company welfare policies, and supportive workplace conditions. In terms of education, most employees have a high school diploma (63.36%), aligning with the company’s needs for roles that do not require advanced technical expertise.

4.2 Hypotheses Results

4.2.1 Hypotheses Testing Results

Table 2. Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Sig.	Results
Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on employee engagement.	0.049	Accepted
Employee engagement has a positive effect on employee performance.	0.000	Accepted
Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on employee performance.	0.000	Accepted
There is a mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance.	0.001 92	Accepted

The results indicate that perceived organizational support (POS) has a significant positive effect on employee performance ($p = 0.049 < 0.05$), thus H2 is accepted. POS also has a significant positive effect on employee engagement (EE) ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), confirming H1. Additionally, EE significantly and positively affects employee performance ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), supporting H3. Based on the Sobel test, EE is proven to partially mediate the relationship between POS and employee performance, with a calculated z-score (4.328) > z-table (1.96) and a significant c' coefficient of 0.171 ($p = 0.049$). Therefore, H4 is also accepted.

Table 3. R-square

Variabel	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error
POS (X)	0,211	0.203	6,338
EE (M)			

The R-square value from the output table is 0.211, obtained by squaring the correlation coefficient ($0.460 \times 0.460 = 0.211$). This indicates that POS on employee performance, with EE as a mediator, explains 21.1% of the variance. The remaining 79.9% is influenced by other factors outside the regression model of this study.

5. Discussion

5.1 Perceived organizational support has a positive influence on employee engagement.

The study found that perceived organizational support (POS) positively influences employee engagement, aligning with Nasurdin et al. (2018), who demonstrated a significant relationship between POS and employee engagement. Based on Social Exchange Theory, organizational support, such as recognition and adequate resources, fosters a sense of value among employees, enhancing their engagement and motivation to contribute to organizational goals.

5.2 Employee engagement has a positive influence on employee performance.

The study confirms that employee engagement positively impacts employee performance, aligning with Social Exchange Theory, which highlights that positive reciprocal interactions between individuals and organizations enhance performance. Consistent with Lai et al. (2020), engaged employees tend to deliver optimal results as they feel personally responsible for achieving organizational goals, making employee engagement an effective strategy to boost overall performance.

5.3 Perceived organizational support has a positive influence on employee performance.

The study shows that perceived organizational support (POS) positively influences employee performance, supporting Social Exchange Theory, which emphasizes mutual benefits between organizations and employees. Employees who feel supported and recognized are motivated to improve performance. This aligns with findings by Karatepe & Aga (2016), highlighting the critical role of organizational support in enhancing employee performance.

5.4 Employee engagement positively mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee performance.

The study found that employee engagement partially mediates the positive relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee performance, meaning H4 is accepted. This aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which explains that organizational support fosters reciprocal relationships, enhancing employee engagement and subsequently improving performance. Consistent with Nasurdin et al. (2018), employee engagement acts as a crucial mediator, linking POS to better performance. Organizations should prioritize enhancing employee engagement to optimize the impact of POS on employee outcomes.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that perceived organizational support (POS) positively influences employee engagement and performance. Employee engagement not only significantly enhances performance but also acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between POS and employee outcomes, strengthening the impact of POS on performance. These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, which emphasizes reciprocal relationships between employees and

organizations, where support fosters emotional, cognitive, and physical engagement. This supports prior research by Karatepe & Aga (2016) and Nasurdin et al. (2018), underscoring the importance of fostering organizational support and engagement to optimize employee performance and achieve organizational goals.

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